The Meadow-Brook Girls Under Canvas

Janet Aldridge

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"I go, I thtay!"

Frontispiece.

The Meadow-Brook Girls Under Canvas

OR

Fun and Frolic in the Summer Camp

By

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The Meadow-Brook Girls Under Canvas

CHAPTER I

CRAZY JANE'S WILD DRIVE

"TOMMY, what are you doing?" demanded Margery Brown, shaking back a lock of unruly hair from her flushed face.

"Conthulting the Oracle," lisped Grace Thompson, more familiarly known among her friends as Tommy.

"I should think you would prefer to cool off in the shade after that climb up the hill. I'm perishing. If you knew what sight you are you'd come in out of the sun, wouldn't she, Hazel?"

Hazel Holland regarded Margery solemnly.

"You are a sight yourself, Buster. Your face is as red as a beet. I wish you might see yourself in a looking glass."

Buster tossed her head disdainfully. "I'm not a sight," she declared.

"I'll leave it to Tommy if your face isn't positively crimson." But Tommy was too fully absorbed in her present occupation to give heed to the remark. "I'm sorry Harriet isn't here," continued Hazel, seeing that Tommy had not heard her.

"Why isn't she here?" asked Margery.

"Harriet is helping her mother," replied Hazel. "She always has something to do at home. She is a much better girl than either you or I, Buster. Harriet is always thinking of others instead of herself."

"Well, she's older. She is sixteen and I am only fourteen. By the time I'm her age I will settle down, too," declared Margery wisely.

"Wearing spectacles and darning socks," smiled Hazel.

Margery shook her head vehemently.

"Wouldn't it be awful?" she queried.

"Oh, I am not so sure of that," replied Hazel. "I like to keep house. Every girl ought to know all about housekeeping. Do you know how to cook?"

"No. I don't want to know either, not even plain cooking," retorted Margery. "Plain cooking may be all right for plain people, but——"

"Buster!" rebuked Hazel. "I am amazed to hear you talk that way. That is like Crazy

Jane. You don't want to be called another 'Crazy Jane,' do you? You will be if you persist in saying such silly things."

"Why don't you lecture Tommy?" demanded Margery, her eyes snapping threateningly. "Tommy doesn't know a biscuit from an apple dumpling until she gets it in her mouth."

"Tommy, please come in out of the heat," begged Hazel. "What are you doing out there?"

"Telling my fortune," answered Tommy without raising her head from her task. Hazel observed that Tommy was pulling a daisy apart. A heap of daisies that she had pulled up by the roots, lay in her lap, regardless of the dirt that was accumulating on her stiffly starched white dress. One by one Tommy pulled the daisy petals from the flower, muttering rythmically to herself.

"Consulting the Oracle," sniffed Buster. "Did you ever hear of anything so silly?"

"We all do silly things," answered Hazel wisely.

"I go, I thtay; I go, I thtay; I go, I thtay; I go—Oh!" Tommy glanced up with an expression of disgust on her face.

"Didn't it come out to suit you?" smiled Hazel Holland.

"No," pouted Tommy, screwing up her small face. When animated, Grace's was an impish face, made more so by the upward tilt of a much freckled nose.

"Go where?" questioned Margery, now evincing a mild interest in Tommy's affairs.

"To the thea thhore."

"Oh, the sea shore," nodded Hazel.

"Yeth. The daithy theth tho. I'm going with my father and mother. But I don't want to go. I want to thtay here with the girlth," pouted Tommy.

"I should think you would be happy to think you are going to the sea shore. Most girls would be," reminded Hazel.

"It must cost a lot of money to go to the sea shore," remarked Margery Brown.

Tommy bobbed her head vigorously.

"Yeth. My father hath lotth of money, I thuppothe. But I don't care. I don't want to go."

"When do you go?"

"I don't know, Hathel. The Oracle thayth I'm going."

The Oracle having settled the question, no further doubts remained in the mind of little Grace Thompson.

Grace's father was a lawyer. Both he and the girl's mother had inherited fortunes, and

Grace being an only child had much finer clothes than any of her companions in the little New Hampshire town of Meadow-Brook.

Hazel Holland and Margery Brown were the daughters of village merchants, the former's father being a druggist, while the father of the latter owned a fairly prosperous grocery business.

The fourth member of this little quartette, Harriet Burrell, was not so fortunately situated as were her three friends. Harriet's father was a bookkeeper in the local bank, and on his moderate salary was doing his best to give his daughter and younger son an education. His salary was barely sufficient to do this and at the same time support his family, small as it was.

It was Harriet's ambition to go to college. She was now sixteen years old. In two more years she would finish her course at the high school. From that point on, the way did not look particularly bright, so far as continuing her education was concerned.

In the meantime Harriet Burrell was living the wholesome life that her environment made possible. She was a strong, healthy, buoyant girl, full of life and spirits, popular with everyone who knew her, and a superior being in the estimation of the three girls who were her close

friends, even though she was unable to dress as well as they or to do other things that were easily within the means of the parents of Grace, Hazel and Margery.

The four girls were together much of the time, quarreling and making up almost in the same breath, even stubborn little Tommy giving way to the kinder and more mature disposition of Harriet Burrell. As Hazel had already said, Harriet at that moment was at home helping her mother, even though the fields, the trees and the nodding daisies were calling loudly to her.

"Must you go if you do not wish to?" Margery was asking.

"I gueth not; not if I don't want to, and I don't," declared Grace with emphasis.

"She thinks she can have more fun with us four girls this summer. Still, she should go if her folks wish her to do so," nodded Hazel thoughtfully. "Don't you say so, Buster?"

"No, I don't," declared Margery with some warmth. "In her place I should do just what I liked best. Then again, it wouldn't be fair for Tommy to go away like that and leave us all alone here to mope through the summer. That's right, Tommy. Tell them you won't go unless—unless you can take us along too."

"Margery!" rebuked Hazel severely. "That

wasn't a nice thing to say. That shows a selfish spirit. If Harriet were here I know she would tell you the same thing. I am sure you didn't mean it that way."

"Harriet wouldn't," protested Buster. "She doesn't put on a solemn face and read people lectures. No, Hazel Holland, she doesn't do anything of the sort. There's some one coming," exclaimed the girl, suddenly changing the subject.

"I see her. It is Miss Elting," answered Hazel, her eyes growing bright. "She is coming up to see us, I do believe."

"Yeth, it'th Mith Elting," decided Grace, screwing up her little face and looking inquiringly at the newcomer who was leisurely making her way along the road in their direction. "I wonder what she wantth."

"Miss Elting is coming up to join us, of course," replied Hazel. "And you see if she doesn't have something fine to suggest. Harriet is going to miss something, I know."

Miss Elting was one of the younger teachers in the Meadow-Brook High School, a leader in the girls' sports and very popular with them. But of all the pupils in the school her favorites were perhaps the four girls to three of whom the reader already has been introduced. Miss Elting called them "The Little Big Four."

The young teacher exerted a great influence over the four Meadow-Brook Girls; she had been especially helpful to Harriet and a closer relation than that of teacher and pupil existed between the two. Both were passionately fond of Nature. They loved the fields, the woods and the waters and many a care-free happy hour they had spent together in the open. Hazel, Margery and Grace frequently accompanied them, though in such instances Harriet and Miss Elting usually found it necessary to cut short their outing because Margery "got all flustered up" from the heat and Tommy's feet usually hurt her.

They had recognized Miss Elting approaching some distance down the road that lay at the foot of the hill upon which the three girls had gone to spend a few leisure hours.

"Hoo-oo!" called Hazel, springing up and waving her handkerchief to attract Miss Elting's attention. The teacher saw them they thought; she appeared to be waving her hand at them, though the distance was so great that they could not be certain of this.

"I'm going to meet her," exclaimed Tommy, springing to her feet. "You thtay here." Tommy started off, scattering a lapful of daisies about her as she ran, then fled down the hill in a series of leaps, her white shoe ties

brushing the tops of the daisies and sending the latter into a nodding sea of protest.

"Grace! Grace, come back!" cried Hazel.

"Isn't she a tomboy?" scoffed Margery. "Her nickname suits her."

Tommy was moving too rapidly at that moment to turn back, even though she had wished to do so. So fast was her gait that she appeared to have lost control of herself. Her little white-shod feet were working like parts of a machine driven at high speed. Her voice floated up to them in a shrill wail.

"Thave me! I'm going to fall," she cried. Then she disappeared from view as she sprawled face downward with arms thrust forward among the daisies and tall grass.

"Oh! She is hurt," cried Hazel in alarm.

"No, she isn't. Don't get excited," answered Margery calmly. "You don't know Tommy if you think a little tumble like that could harm her. See, there she goes."

Sure enough, Grace was on her feet again racing down the hill at the same reckless pace as before. She reached the foot of the hill without further mishap, hesitated a second or so at the fence, and then vaulted over it. For a moment, she was out of sight in the ditch beside the road, then she was seen clambering into the dusty highway.

Hazel was laughing.

"You couldn't do that, Buster, I'll warrant."

"I am sure I don't want to," answered Margery stretching out comfortably with her hands supporting her head. "I'm no circus performer."

Hazel uttered a little exclamation.

"Look Margery! Look!" she cried.

"Well, what is it? I don't see anything," replied Margery petulantly, raising herself on one elbow, gazing listlessly down into the valley where the village lay baking under the hot June sun.

"It's a special," cried Hazel. "See, the cars are orange colored. Aren't they pretty? I never saw anything more attractive."

Margery turned up her nose disdainfully.

"I don't see anything about a railroad train to get excited over," she answered, lying back in the shade of the maple tree, beneath which the girls had been resting for the past hour or so.

That the special train rushing down the valley, would make no stop at Meadow-Brook, Hazel could plainly see. Trains that were to stop there always slowed down before reaching the second crossing west of the village. This one had not done so. No sooner had Hazel observed this than she caught sight of

something else, something that set her nerves all a tingle. A huge cloud of dust was rolling down the highway near the railroad tracks. That this cloud was not caused by the train was plain to the watching girl. Soon she was able to make out the outlines of an automobile in the cloud of dust. The train was but a short distance away. Each was making for the crossing, where the highway and railroad tracks met. Hazel did not believe the driver of the motor car was aware that the train was so close, even if the driver knew of its presence at all, for no train was due to pass through Meadow-Brook at that hour.

The color suddenly left Hazel Holland's face.

"Quick! Quick! Look!" she gasped.

"It's too hot to keep bobbing up and down," returned Margery indifferently.

"But look! Look!"

"Tell me about it, Hazel, dear. You do not have to get up to see. I do."

"Oh, Buster, there's going to be a collision."

"Eh? What?" Buster was on her feet instantly.

"The train is going to hit the automobile!"

Margery's face paled. Her breath came more quickly. Her eyes grew large and wondering. The power of speech seemed suddenly to have left her. They had forgotten all about

Grace Thompson in the greater interest of the moment. Margery shivered with apprehension while beads of perspiration stood out on her forehead. She was staring in terror at the on-rushing car.

"Oh!" she shuddered. "There'll surely be a collision."

"Look! The chauffeur doesn't see the train on account of the dust. Don't you see the dust rising in the road ahead of the automobile? The wind is blowing it up ahead and the machine is kicking it up behind. Hoo-oo! Hoo-oo!" cried the girl, frantically waving her handkerchief to attract the attention of the driver of the car, at the same time pointing to the rapidly approaching train.

Instead of slackening speed, the driver of the motor car appeared to be putting on more. The car was rapidly nearing the railroad crossing. So was the train.

"Oh, I can't look at it," cried Margery, throwing herself on the ground and burying her face in her arms.

Hazel stood perfectly rigid. She scarcely breathed. Her eyes were wide and staring.

"Ha—as it hap-p-pened?" faltered Margery.

"No-o-o. Oh! The driver is going to be killed! Oh, oh!"

For one awful second the motor car and en-

gine of the special were swallowed up in a cloud of dust, then out of the cloud darted the locomotive on one side. On the other dashed the automobile, still on four wheels, continuing at the same reckless speed along the highway.

Hazel uttered a little scream.

"He's made it. Oh!" She sank to the ground pale and trembling. Margery raised a very red, very scared face.

"Wa—as he killed?"

"No."

"Oh, fudge! Why didn't you scare me to death while you were——"

"Look Oh, look!"

"I won't," declared Margery firmly. "Go crazy if you wish. I won't."

"It's Tommy!"

Buster bobbed up in a fresh panic.

The "man" in the motor car was gazing up at the girls waving one hand to them, steering the car with the other hand.

"It's a woman!" gasped Hazel.

"It's Crazy Jane," cried Margery. "No wonder she nearly ran down a train of cars."

"Tommy! Oh, Tom-my!" screamed Hazel Holland, hopping about frantically, waving both arms above her head, seeking to attract the attention of the woman driver as well as that of Tommy.

The little white figure had climbed the bank into the highway and was now fleeing down the road to meet her friend Miss Elting. Tommy did not see the automobile approaching from the rear. A knoll and a bend in the road hid the driver of the car and the little white figure from each other. The noise of the train either drowned that of the automobile, or else, Grace thought the rumble made by the car to be that made by the train that had just passed down the valley.

The motor car roared around the bend. Miss Elting screamed as she saw it. Grace heard the scream, but failing to understand the meaning of it, decided it to be some sort of greeting. The little girl waved her arms in reply. Miss Elting was gesticulating and pointing frantically. The two girls on the hillside were for the moment paralyzed with fright.

All at once, Grace appeared to perceive her danger. She turned sharply. There she stood, her frightened face turned toward the oncoming car that was rapidly approaching her enveloped in a blinding cloud of dust. The driver and Tommy discovered each other at about the same instant. There was no time to stop the car.

Suddenly, car and Tommy were swallowed up in the dust cloud.

"Grace is killed!" screamed Margery.

"Yes, oh yes!" wailed Hazel, wringing her hands. "What shall we do?"

Out of the dust cloud hurtled the little white figure. She appeared to have been doubled up into a large white ball by the car when it struck her.

The ball rolled from the road, disappearing into the roadside ditch. The motor car lurched around the curve in the road, zig-zagged past Miss Elting, then became a rolling cloud of dust again.

CHAPTER II

WHAT HAPPENED TO TOMMY

"OH-H-H!" moaned Margery. "Poor Tommy has been killed."

In that terrible moment Hazel Holland came nearer to fainting than ever before in her life. She pulled herself sharply together. Margery was by this time sobbing hysterically.

"Don't do that," commanded Hazel sharply. "We must do something. Come quickly!"

Hazel started down the hillside in the trail followed by Tommy during her break-neck sprint to meet Miss Elting. The latter was al-

ready running toward the scene of the accident. Hazel recalled afterwards having wondered at the time that a woman could run so fast. Miss Elting's feet seemed barely to touch the ground. Margery, mustering her courage, staggered to her feet and followed Hazel at a slower pace, though she, too, was running.

Hazel was the first to reach the place where Grace had been hurled from the highway by the car.

"Grace!" she screamed, clambering awkwardly over the fence, dropping down on the road side. "Oh, Grace, are you killed?"

A pale-faced girl was sitting at the bottom of the dry ditch with both feet tucked under her. There was a bewildered look on her small face. She was blinking dazedly.

"Oh, dearie, are you injured?" cried Miss Elting, slipping and sliding down into the ditch beside the pale-faced Tommy.

"Yeth."

"Tell me where, what?"

"My feelingth are hurt."

"She's alive! She's alive," cried Hazel, throwing impulsive arms about the neck of her little friend.

"Your feelings are hurt? Well, dear, if that is all, you are a lucky girl," smiled Miss Elting. "Did the automobile hit you?"

"Yeth."

At this juncture, Margery made her appearance in a wholly unexpected manner. Margery in climbing the fence had caught her skirt on a nail. She plunged headlong down the bank into the ditch, almost falling on Grace.

"Oh, oh!" groaned Margery.

Hazel, laughing almost hysterically in her joy at finding Grace alive, quickly assisted Margery to her feet, wiping the dirt from Buster's flushed face.

"She isn't hurt at all," laughed Margery, fixing a glance of inquiry on Tommy's face.

"Tommy says her feelings are hurt," Miss Elting informed Buster.

"Then I am worse off than she. Because I tore my skirt and hurt my arm, too. Catch me running on another wild goose chase like this one. I don't believe the car hit you at all, Tommy Thompson."

"Yeth it did," protested Tommy. "Of courthe it did. I gueth I know. I felt it."

"Stand up," commanded Miss Elting, placing both hands under the arms of the girl and assisting her to her feet. "There! Now see if you can walk. Of course you can," comforted the teacher. "The car never touched you. You must have leaped out of the way just in time. Come, I will help you into the road, then

we will take you home. But where is Harriet? I heard she was out here with you girls."

"I should not be here had not Tommy and Hazel dragged me out," declared Margery. "Violent exercise is not good for one during the hot weather."

"It'th very good for you, Buthter," remarked Tommy wisely. "It ithn't good for a growing girl to be thtout, tho I've heard."

"Don't worry. You will never suffer from being too stout," retorted Margery. "You can't keep still long enough."

"Mith Elting, I've been thitting here in the ditch for ever and ever tho long and not thaying a word, and Buthter thayth I can't keep thtill."

"Why don't you girls stop squabbling and answer Miss Elting's question?" demanded Hazel. "Harriet is at home, Miss Elting."

"Yeth, Harriet ith wathing ditheth for her mother," said Tommy. "I'd like to thee anybody make me wath ditheth if I didn't want to."

"That isn't a nice thing to say, Grace," rebuked the teacher. "Of course Harriet is a great help to her mother, as every girl should be. Suppose, Grace, that your mother could not afford to hire a servant to do these things for her? In that case I am positive you would do whatever you could to assist your mother.

I believe you would make a fine little housekeeper."

Grace shook her head with emphasis.

"No? Then what would you do if your mother insisted upon your washing dishes?"

"I'd drop the ditheth. Maybe they wouldn't want me to wath any more ditheth after that," replied Tommy, screwing up her face so impishly that Miss Elting laughed aloud.

"Is it any wonder that Grace and myself quarrel awfully at times, Miss Elting?" asked Margery.

"They don't mean anything by it," apologized Hazel.

"Thay, what did you come up here for, Mith Elting?" questioned Tommy, directing a glance of suspicious inquiry at the teacher. "Do you want uth to go for another nithe little walk? No, thank you. I've walked with you before. Thank you very kindly. My feet are too thore and Buthter ith too tired. Harriet'th brother thayth that Buthter wath born with that tired feeling. I geth he'th right. Don't you think tho, Miss Elting? Thit down and retht, and I'll tell your fortune with a daithy."

"If you are rested sufficiently I think we had better move on. Don't worry, Grace. I am not going to drag you away on one of those long walks. But I have something to tell you."

"I knew it," piped Tommy. "Look out! There cometh another automobile." Tommy shied from her position in the road like a skittish horse.

Just then the car that had caused all the trouble came honking toward them and slowed down with a series of explosions that sounded like the discharges of a Gatling gun. The young woman who was driving the car, brought it to a stop, leaped out and running to Grace threw her arms about the slender girl in white.

"Oh, my darlin', my darlin'. My blessed little Tommy. Did I kill you altogether? And I wasn't going a little bit, was I? But didn't I come near to ripping the cowcatcher from that engine? Wasn't it just glorious the way I dodged the old thing? I knew all the time it was going to be a close shave, but I made up my mind I'd beat 'em out even if I took off the hind wheels of my car. Get in, you dears. I'll drive you home."

"What! Ride with you?" questioned Margery. "Not for a million dollars. It's a shame. They ought to arrest you."

"Yes, Jane," rebuked Miss Elting. "You shouldn't go racing about the way you do. Your car nearly ran over Grace."

"Dad says I drive too fast. He says he doesn't blame folks for calling me 'Crazy Jane.'

He says I'll meet with an accident one of these days. But Dad has old-fashioned ideas."

Jane paused long enough to brush back two stray locks from her flushed face. Her hair was all awry and her attire showed carelessness and haste in dressing.

"Well, darlin's, if you won't go with me I think I'll go and get Harriet. She isn't afraid to ride with me."

"Please don't do that," replied Miss Elting. "We are on our way to see Harriet on important business."

"So long, then. I'm off, girls."

Jane sprang into her car and drove away with a sputter and a roar, disappearing in a cloud of pungent blue smoke.

"Isn't she a crazy creature?" demanded Margery disdainfully.

"She means well," soothed Hazel.

"Yeth. Thhe meanth to kill thomebody well," corrected Tommy.

Jane McCarthy had acquired the name of "Crazy Jane" because of her reckless driving, her harum-scarum ways and her complete ignoring of public opinion. Not a few of the residents of the little New Hampshire village feared that Jane might be brought home after one of her wild drives, with broken bones, if not worse.

In spite of her reckless manner Jane was well liked. She was good hearted and very charitable, though her charity was not always bestowed with judgment. Being motherless she had practically done as she pleased ever since she began to walk, and her father, a wealthy contractor, had indulged her every whim, believing that Jane could do no wrong. Jane was prompt to take advantage of this paternal leniency, though her worst offense was that of continuously terrorizing the neighborhood in which she lived and the whole countryside as well, by her reckless driving with both car and horse.

The narrow escape of Grace Thompson from being run over by the big touring car had not shaken Jane's nerve in the least. It had shaken Tommy's only briefly. Tommy, supple and alert, had leaped from the road just in time to avoid being run down by the car. A second's delay on her part would undoubtedly have proved serious if not fatal to Tommy Thompson.

But the three girls were to see more of Jane in the near future. She was to play a more active part in their lives than she had ever before done. Just now they were more interested in what they instinctively felt Miss Elting had to say to them.

"Now, listen, girls," said Miss Elting after the roar of the car had died away in the distance. "I will tell you about the very pleasant plans I have made for you and Harriet."

CHAPTER III

THE TRAIL TO CAMP WAU-WAU

"I UNDERSTAND that your parents have been considering your going to the sea shore with them, Grace?" said Miss Elting with a rising inflection in her voice. "I suppose you are eager to go?"

"No, I'm not. What'th more, I'm not going. I'm going to thtay here with the girlth. Why?" Tommy regarded the teacher keenly.

"Because my dear, if you are not going to the sea shore I wish to include you in my plans for the summer. I have a fine vacation planned for the four of you. Does any of you know the location of Pocono Woods?"

The girls shook their heads.

"It is a forest near Jamesburg about twenty-five miles from here. How would you young women enjoy spending your vacations in a camp in the woods, living in tents and——"

"Really truly tentth?" interrupted Tommy.

"Yes, dear. Real tents and campfires and

all that sort of thing, right in the heart of the Pocono Woods, miles and miles from civilization."

"Are there any thnaketh there?" questioned Grace apprehensively.

"No, no snakes."

"Mothquitoeth?"

"There may be a few mosquitoes. I cannot say as to that. But it is a lovely spot. This camp," Miss Elting went on to say, "is for young girls and young women, and is part of the Camp Girls' Association, a large and growing organization. You will find a great many other young women there and you will, while there, be in charge of a guardian."

"Guardian?" interrupted Grace. "My father ith my guardian."

"Oh, I don't mean that sort of a guardian," answered Miss Elting with a bright smile. "The guardians are merely the women who take charge of the girls during their stay in camp. I am to be one of them this summer. I had planned to take you four girls there after the close of school, but did not think it advisable to speak of my plans until they were more fully developed and all arrangements completed. Now what do you think of it?"

"It is perfectly splendid," cried Margery. "Won't that be great, girls? But," she added,

her face sobering, "I do not think my father and mother would permit me to go."

"I am quite sure that mine would not," agreed Hazel solemnly.

"I gueth Mith Elting hath theen to that," spoke up Tommy, her eyes narrowing.

"You have made a close guess, Grace. They have agreed, all except in your case. Your mother wishes to talk the matter over with you and your father before making a final decision."

"Then it ith all right," nodded Tommy confidently. "I'll make them let me go anyway and—ith Harriet going?"

"Yes. I hope so."

"Doeth thhe know about it?"

"I have not spoken to Harriet about it. I had hoped to do so out here to-day. That is why I proposed just now that we return to the village. We shall have a chance to talk it over on the way back, when I will tell you more about the proposed vacation."

"You thay my folkth know about it, Mith Elting?"

"Yes, dear."

"What did they thay?"

"That they thought you had better go to Narragansett with them, but that if you insisted, they supposed you would have to go to the sum-

mer camp with us," admitted the teacher with a tolerant smile.

Tommy twisted her face into a grimace.

"My folkth know what ith good for them," averred the little blonde girl.

"I am afraid, my dear, that you do not fully know what is good for yourself," declared the teacher reprovingly. "You will have to obey the rules when you get to camp, and they are quite strict. There are so many girls there, that rather strict regulations have to be enforced. Every girl is expected to live up to them. Failing to do so she undoubtedly would be sent home."

"If they catch her," answered Tommy wisely. "You thay that Harriet doethn't know about thith?"

"Not yet, Grace."

The girl reflected for a moment. They had started slowly toward the village. All at once Tommy started down the road at top speed.

"Grace, Grace!" called Miss Elting.

"She's gone to tell Harriet what you have said," declared Margery.

A shade of annoyance passed over Miss Elting's face, quickly giving place to an amused smile as she watched the light-footed Tommy speeding down the road. Tommy whisked herself out of their sight in no time.

"Let us hurry on," urged the teacher. "Grace is sure to confuse the story if she tries to tell it. Mrs. Burrell wished me to tell Harriet of the camping trip that is before her."

The girls nodded their approval of the suggestion. Margery held her head a little higher than usual. She wanted to impress upon Miss Elting the fact that she was too dignified to do what Tommy had just done.

In the meantime Grace had continued her wild flight to the door of the Burrell home into which she burst like a miniature cyclone. Her face was flushed and her eyes sparkled. Her white dress was crumpled and stained from sprawling on the hillside and falling out of the road into the wayside ditch.

"Oh, Harriet! Harriet!" she gasped, flinging herself into the room where Harriet Burrell and her mother sat sewing on one of Harriet's dresses which, though the young woman did not know it, was intended for her to wear during the coming vacation in camp.

Harriet sprang up and ran to the excited Tommy, believing that something terrible had occurred.

"Tommy, Tommy! What is it?" she cried.

"The greatetht thing you ever heard. Oh, I won't tell you. It ith too good. Gueth what? Gueth!" chuckled Grace.

"I am afraid I cannot," laughed Harriet, now discovering that nothing was amiss with Grace. "I am not a good guesser, but I do guess that you are very much excited."

"You're going, too," interrupted Grace. "We're all going, and we're all going to live in——"

"Sit down, Tommy and calm yourself. You are so excited that I can't understand anything from your jumble of words," admonished Harriet, laying a firm hand on the arm of her friend and pushing Grace into a chair.

"I don't want to thit down," objected Tommy bobbing up again. "I want to talk, then I want to danthe. Oh, I'm tho happy. But I'm a thight," she added, glancing down at her gown.

"I agree with you," answered Harriet, smilingly. "Do sit down and compose yourself. Where are the girls? Are they as flustrated as you are?"

"Yeth, and they're going, too. They're coming here with Mith Elting. They're coming from over there." Harriet smiled as Grace waved an excited hand toward the west, the direction in which the hill lay.

"Tell me about it. I am growing curious. Where is it we are going?"

Tommy bobbed up from her chair and began dancing about the room.

"Oh, ever and ever tho far."

By this time Mrs. Burrell began to understand. She realized that the cat was about to jump out of the bag, but made no effort to assist Grace in telling the story. Instead Harriet's mother sat with an amused smile on her face.

"We're going away, we're going away. Don't you underthtand?"

"No, Tommy, I don't."

"Oh, fiddle!"

"Where is it that we are going?"

"Ever and ever tho far away. Way off in the woodth where the birdth thing and the frogth croak and the mothquitoeth bite you and thpoil your complexion. And, oh, gueth, gueth, Harriet."

Harriet threw up her hands, an expression of comical despair on her face.

"I give you up, Tommy. You are hopeless. Here come Miss Elting and the girls. Perhaps Miss Elting can tell us what it is all about. I am not going away. You are going to the sea shore, are you not, Tommy?"

Tommy shook her head vigorously.

"I'm not," she declared, with a stamp of her foot. "I'm going to the woodth and——"

"You ran away from us, you naughty girl," chided Miss Elting after having greeted Mrs.

Burrell and Harriet. Margery and Hazel had followed her in, and were now shaking hands with Harriet, though it had been only a matter of some two hours since last they met.

"I suppose Grace has told you all about it, Harriet. However, there may be a few dry details left for me," continued Miss Elting with a severe frown at Tommy.

"She hasn't told me anything. She has tried to tell me, but she is too excited to be intelligible. Please tell me what it is all about. I am anxious to hear the news."

"Let Grace tell it, now that she has begun," suggested Miss Elting, nodding to the excited Tommy.

However, with the entrance of the teacher and the two girls, Tommy in her haste to blurt out the full story had become hopelessly tangled. She hesitated, stammered, then stopped short. There was a merry laugh at her expense.

"I shall have to tell you after all, young ladies," said the teacher. "You four girls, it has been decided, are to go with me to the summer camp in the Pocono Woods. Do you know about the summer camp there, Harriet?"

"I have heard of it," answered Harriet, gazing steadily at the speaker. "It is quite an important organization, is it not?"

"Just so. As I already have explained to the girls, I am one of the guardians. I thought it would be fine to have my Meadow-Brook Girls accompany me, and with the consent of the parents of each girl, I have arranged for you to remain in the camp for six weeks, at least, or until we have to return to get ready for the fall term of school here."

"Yeth, and, and, and——" began Tommy. "Oh do hurry up and tell the retht, Mith Elting," she ended impatiently.

The smile slowly faded from Harriet's face, and now that the animation had left it, it was rather plain. Her hair brushed straight back from a broad forehead, made more pronounced the undeniable plainness of her features. But when animated that face was fairly transformed. As Miss Elting had expressed it, "Harriet lighted up divinely." She was a tall, well built girl whose erect carriage and graceful poise indicated athletic training.

"Yes, that will be fine, indeed," agreed Harriet. "Of course you know it will not be possible for me to go with you, much as I should like to. You understand why without my explaining, Miss Elting."

"Yeth you will go," burst out Grace, suddenly finding her voice again. "I'll pay for you. I've got lotth and lotth of money."

Harriet's face flushed.

"You are a dear, Tommy. But you know I could not permit you to do that," was Harriet's gentle reply. "It is very, very good of you, but wholly impossible. You know Miss Elting, that I could not afford a vacation such as that, much as I should like to go. Oh, wouldn't it be fine if we four girls might spend our vacation in camp together?" she exclaimed, her features lighting up again.

"And so you shall," answered Miss Elting with a finality in her tone that led Harriet Burrell to gaze at the young woman with keen, questioning eyes. "Listen, my dear. I am going to take you with me as my guest. As I have already explained, I am one of the guardians of the camp. The guardians receive no remuneration for their services, but each is entitled, if she wishes, to take one girl with her as her guest. The girl so taken would be a member of the camp, just the same as the others. She would in no sense be a charity member either. She would be on exactly the same footing as her companions. That is the way you are going to join the camping party. I am inviting you to be my guest. Your name already has been registered with Mrs. Livingston, the Chief Guardian of the camp. Your place will be ready for you when you reach

there, and I believe you will enjoy your summer thoroughly."

"Now what have you got to thay to that?" demanded Grace triumphantly.

Harriet turned a thoughtful gaze on the smiling face of her mother.

"And you knew about this all the time, but said never a word to me, Mother?"

"Yes, dear."

"Oh, you darling Mother," cried the girl impulsively, throwing both arms about Mrs. Burrell's neck, kissing her affectionately. From her mother Harriet turned her attention to Miss Elting whom she also embraced in a bear-like hug. "How can I ever thank you?"

"By going with us," answered Miss Elting.

"Thay, aren't you going to kith me? Didn't I firtht tell you about it?" demanded Tommy.

Harriet ran over to her little friend, kissing her lightly, at the same time giving Tommy's ear a pinch.

"Girls, you have been in the secret all the time, too, haven't you?"

"Do you think I could keep a thecret all that time?" answered Grace. "Didn't I nearly break my prethiouth neck to get down here to tell you the good newth the minute I heard it? Didn't I get run over by an automobile, too?"

"Grace fell down the hill. She did have a

narrow escape from being run down by Crazy Jane," explained Miss Elting.

Harriet regarded her little friend with twinkling eyes.

"When do we go?" she asked.

"On Saturday, the day after to-morrow."

"So soon? Oh, that will be glorious. But how about clothes. What do the girls wear? Anything they happen to have?"

"No. They dress alike, or nearly so."

"Then I fear I shan't be able to go. You see I have nothing except my regular clothes."

Miss Elting continued speaking, unheeding the interruption.

"The everyday dress is of dark blue serge, the waist is batiste lined, it has long sleeves and a large flowing bow, made of plaid or Roman-striped silk at the neck. The skirt for the large girls is plain with a wide box pleat at the back. The skirt for the smaller girls is kilted and made ankle-length or shorter if desired. The dress has three pockets, one of them in the sleeve——"

"Funny plathe for a pocket," observed Tommy.

"Now do you begin to understand?" smiled Miss Elting.

"Why—why," stammered Harriet. "That is the very thing mother and I have been work-

ing on. I've been at work on my camp dress all the time and didn't know it." Harriet laughed excitedly. There were tears of joy in her eyes. "Oh, what a goose I have been, haven't I, girls?"

"Yeth," agreed Tommy, bobbing her head up and down.

"The official hat," continued Miss Elting, "is also of dark blue serge to match the rest of the outfit. It has a white silk cord about the crown with the name of the camp in white on the blue background. I forgot to say that the emblem of your rank in the camp order, will be worked on the sleeve. That may be done after reaching camp."

"What is the name of the camp—Pocono?" asked Harriet for the sake of continuing the conversation. She was too dazed to think clearly as yet.

"Camp 'Wau-Wau' is the name. It is a Chinook Indian name. 'Wau-Wau' is a term, usually applied to a number of squaws gathering for a confab, and corresponds to the 'powwow' of the braves. Now you know all about it. We shall start from here on the noon train Saturday."

CHAPTER IV

IN THE HEART OF THE FOREST

"IS the wagon for Camp Wau-Wau here?" asked Miss Elting.

Four happy-faced girls, accompanied by the teacher, had left the train at Jamesburg, from where they were to be conveyed by wagon into the woods. Miss Elting was directed to a three-seated buck-board wagon. Jasper, the handy man about the camp was on the driver's seat. He was an old man who said little. It was rumored that three seasons spent at Wau-Wau had thoroughly subdued him.

"What about the trunks?" asked the young woman.

"Fetch 'em to-morrow," he answered tersely.

Tommy regarded the slender looking buck-board apprehensively.

"Buthter better walk," she decided. "The wagon won't hold her."

"Now, now, Tommy, do stop teasing Buster. If the wagon goes down Margery will go down with it," answered Harriet laughingly.

"And she will fall a great deal harder than will you," added Miss Elting, at which there was a merry laugh.

It was late in the afternoon when they finally climbed into the buck-board which sagged in the middle until all the girls began to grow apprehensive. They started away along a country road a gay party, indeed, but Harriet noted that horse and driver were not well matched. The horse she could plainly see was young and fractious, and she wondered what the old man would do should the animal prove unmanageable. Their driver, however, appeared to have perfect control over the animal, so Harriet dismissed the disturbing thought from her mind and prepared to enjoy the ride.

The drive to the camp was fully twenty miles. Having come by train they had covered nearly twice the distance that would have been necessary had they driven direct from Meadow-Brook. The fields through which they were driving were green, the air was fresh and fragrant after a shower that had fallen earlier in the day and the girls in the buck-board wagon were in high spirits.

"I'll tell you what, girls," cried Harriet after they had sung all the songs they knew and discussed the country through which they were passing until the latter subject had been worn out. "I'll tell you what we ought to have."

"Ith it thomething nithe?" questioned Grace.

"It is a yell, Tommy."

"A yell? I can yell."

"I don't mean it in that way. Something like a high school or a college yell. We are the Meadow-Brook Girls, you know. We have a name, now we must have a yell."

"Oh, Mith Elting, give uth a yell, a loud one," urged Tommy, her eyes sparkling.

Miss Elting smiled tolerantly.

"You had better arrange one to suit yourselves," she answered. "Harriet, you will have to provide the yell now that you have suggested it."

Harriet already had a pencil in her hand. She sat holding the pencil poised above the fly leaf of a book that she had brought along to read, but had not up to this moment, so much as opened. Her brow was wrinkled in thought. Tommy was regarding her keenly.

"Well, aren't you going to yell?"

All at once Harriet's face relaxed. She began to write. Margery craned her neck to see what was being written, but Harriet held the cover of the book in such a position that Buster could not see what was being jotted down.

"It isn't polite to look over another person's shoulder in that way," reproved Hazel.

"Well, you wouldn't exthpect Buthter to be polite when she ith away from home, would you?" demanded Grace.

"I have it," announced Harriet. "Listen, girls and see how you like this:

"'Rah, rah, rah,
Rah, rah, rah
Meadow-Brook, Meadow-Brook,
Sis, boom ah!'"

"What do you think of that, girls? Isn't that simply fine?" cried Miss Elting enthusiastically. But her voice was lost in the chorus that welled forth from the throats of the Meadow-Brook Girls, who had taken up the yell with a will. Tommy's "thith boom ah!" at the end of the yell sent not only the girls, but Miss Elting as well into peals of merry laughter.

Jasper never smiled. He stroked his long whiskers reflectively. Harriet who occupied the seat beside him, stole a glance at the old man out of the corner of one eye.

"I suppose you are used to girls, aren't you?" she asked.

"Ya-a-a-s," drawled Jasper then relapsed into silence. The girls promptly broke the silence again by giving the Meadow-Brook yell. They continued to give it until their throats ached. Now and then three of them would stop short of the last line in order to catch more clearly Tommy's "thith boom ah!" which always sent them into screams of laughter. Finally Tommy became angry and refused to yell.

But the little lisping girl was like an April day. Her frowns of displeasure were replaced by smiles within a very few minutes. The girls had learned not to take Grace's fits of temper seriously. When she became ruffled, they simply left her to herself for a few moments well knowing that the clouds would soon pass and the sun shine again.

"There are the woods! Oh, girls, look at them," cried Harriet. The wagon had reached the top of a high knoll in the road, when below them was revealed the dark blue of a forest that stretched straight ahead and to the right and left as far as the eye could reach.

"Yes, that is Pocono Woods," Miss Elting informed them. "Are they large enough to suit you?"

"What would we do if we were to get lost in there?" gasped Margery.

"I know what I'd do," piped Tommy. "I'd yell like thixthty."

"You are likely to do that even though you are not lost," chuckled the guardian.

"How far into the woods do we go?" wondered Harriet.

" 'Bout ten mile, I reckon," answered Jasper.

"Ten miles? Listen to that, girls. Oh, isn't it perfectly splendid?" exclaimed Harriet.

"I never dreamed that I should have such a glorious vacation as this is going to be. How many girls are there in camp, Miss Elting?"

"Forty or fifty I should say. I do not know the exact number. You will find a happy lot of young women. Are you hungry?"

There was a general assent to the question.

Miss Elting produced a small hamper in which were sandwiches, cold tea, milk and fruit. It was a delightful surprise to the girls. They showed their further appreciation by eating every crumb of the luncheon, while Jasper contented himself with nibbling at a single sandwich which he held in one hand, driving the young horse with the other.

In this way they drove into the forest, entered the cool dark shadows of the big woods, and were greeted with a chorus of piping twitters from hundreds of forest birds, varied now and then by the hoarse caw of a distant crow whose voice perhaps had started the woodland chorus. The fragrance of the woods mingled delightfully with the perfume of the wild honeysuckle. The Meadow-Brook Girls fell silent under the majesty of the forest. Tommy was the first to break the spell.

"Thith ith a thpooky old plathe," she declared with a shiver. "Oh, Mr. Jathper, are there any fairieth in thethe woodth?"

"Any what?"

"Fairies," explained Harriet, smiling absently.

"Never seen none," answered the old man gruffly.

"Isn't it simply glorious?" breathed Hazel.

"It is too wonderful for words," agreed Harriet.

Miss Elting nodded, smiling happily at the enthusiasm of the girls. The wagon was following an old logging road. Small bushes grew up in the middle of the road. The wheels sank down into deep ruts that had been cut by the tires of the heavy logging wagons, but in general the way was free of obstructions, though the bushes in the road tickled the hide of the young horse until he began to prance from one side of the road to the other in an effort to avoid them. Harriet wanted to suggest to Jasper that he use both hands to drive, but she did not quite like to do so. He undoubtedly would resent her interference, nor could she blame him for doing so.

"Jasper, are you sure the horse is perfectly safe?" questioned Miss Elting apprehensively.

"Hasn't been doing nothing for nigh onto a week. Jest feels his oats, that's all."

Harriet was not fully satisfied with the explanation, though the others appeared to be.

Harriet watched the animal now even more closely than she had done before.

"Gid-ap!" commanded Jasper, giving the horse an unexpected slap with the reins after a particularly quick swerve to one side of the road on the animal's part. The horse cleared the road with a single leap sideways. He had been pricked by the sharp top of a bush at the instant the reins were brought down on his back. The reins not being under the full control of the driver at that moment, the animal took advantage of the fact and shying clear out of the narrow road, plunged in among the trees in a panic of fear.

There followed a crunching grinding crash.

"Thave me! Oh, thave me!" screamed Tommy.

With a ripping sound the canopy top was stripped clear of the vehicle and left dangling from the low hanging limbs of the trees under which the buck-board wagon had been dragged.

"Hold fast! Don't try to jump!" commanded Miss Elting without the least trace of excitement in her voice. Hazel placed a firm hand on the arm of the terror-stricken Tommy.

The right forward wheel of the wagon collided with a tree. The wheel was shattered, and the end of the axle broken off short. At the same instant the horse sprang sharply to

the left evidently in an effort to get back into the log road, facing almost in the opposite direction.

Jasper being on the downhill side when the wheel collapsed, plunged head first from the seat, landing heavily on the ground. His head coming into contact with the base of the tree, Jasper sank over on his side, unconscious.

Harriet had not lost her head for a second. As the driver fell she snatched at the reins. She caught one of them, the other falling to the ground on the wrecked side of the wagon.

The thills of the wagon broke off short with reports like the explosions of a pistol. Then the horse bolted. Harriet grasping the one rein with both hands shot over the dashboard of the wagon as though she had been projected from a cannon. Hazel and Tommy were also pitched from the vehicle, Miss Elting and Margery clinging to the seats as the wagon toppled over on its side.

"Let go!" shouted Miss Elting. "You'll be killed!"

But Harriet clung to the single rein, the frantic animal dragging her away at a frightful rate of speed.

CHAPTER V

THEIR TROUBLES MULTIPLY

HARRIET BURRELL'S position was, indeed, a perilous one. She was too plucky to release her grip on the rein, no matter what the cost to herself, and her gown. Clinging desperately to the rein she was jerked violently across the log road, the horse dragging her after him as he bolted in among the trees on the opposite side.

Harriet still hoped that she might be able to check the animal and bring it to a standstill. She did not pause to think what a foolhardy thing she was doing. All of a sudden the animal swung about in a half circle. He literally cracked the whip with Harriet Burrell. The rein slapped the side of a big tree. Harriet was lifted from her feet and hurled with great force into the middle of a heap of brush. The dead branches snapped under her weight and she landed at the bottom of the heap, then lay still.

Miss Elting upon finding that the other three girls were more scared than hurt, had run after the fleeing horse that was dragging Harriet away. She cried out in her alarm as she saw

the girl land in the brush heap. But by the time Miss Elting had reached the spot, Harriet's pale, scratched face appeared above the top of the brush.

"Oh, my dear, my dear! Are you hurt?"

"Oh, I am all right, thank you," answered Harriet with a brave smile. "Was—was any one injured?"

Before answering Miss Elting had plunged into the brush waist deep to lend a hand to Harriet. The gowns of both women were considerably damaged before Harriet had been assisted from her uncomfortable predicament.

"You poor girl!" exclaimed Miss Elting.

"I am somewhat the worse for wear," smiled Harriet ruefully.

"Thave me, thave me!"

At sound of the familiar voice and the familiar words they turned to see Tommy running toward them.

"Jathper hath a fit," cried Tommy.

Miss Elting and Harriet ran back to the scene of the accident as fast as they could go. Harriet was limping a little. They found Jasper sitting at the base of the tree, holding his head and groaning. Hazel and Margery stood pale-faced gazing down at him.

"What seems to be the matter with him?" questioned Miss Elting.

"It ain't me. It's the hoss," groaned Jasper. "That three-year old cost me jest a hundred and fifty dollars two weeks ago."

"You will get him back," soothed Harriet.

"Yes, but he's spiled. D' ye think Mis' Livingston'll ever trust me to take out another passel of girls behind that critter? And the rig! It's smashed. It's busted."

"I shouldn't worry until I had to," advised Miss Elting. "Just now we have other things to concern us."

"Which way did my hoss go?"

Harriet did not know. Her head had been in such a whirl at the time she had parted company with the animal, that she had lost all sense of direction. Miss Elting said the animal had started back toward Jamesburg.

"Then I must git back to the burg and find him," declared Jasper.

"He ithn't going to leave uth here in the woodth, ith he?" wailed Grace.

"Don't worry," replied the guardian. "Jasper, how far are we from town?"

"Nigh onto fifteen mile."

"Then we should be about five miles from the camp?"

He nodded.

"What do you propose to do with us in the meantime?" demanded Miss Elting.

"You kin wait here till I git another hoss and come back."

"No, thank you. We do not care to sit down here until you return, which will not be until some time to-morrow morning, even if you hurry."

"I got to git that hoss or another hoss," persisted Jasper.

"You will do nothing of the kind. You will remain right here with us," declared Miss Elting firmly. "You shall not go to Jamesburg for a horse until you have seen us safely in camp. Is there any chance of any one else driving past here?"

He shook his head.

"Why can't we walk it?" asked Harriet.

"I had been thinking of making that suggestion. Do you feel equal to it, Harriet?"

"Oh, yes. And the woods are so nice and cool and fragrant. I should prefer walking to riding behind that horse again."

"So should I," agreed Miss Elting with emphasis.

"I got to git a hoss," repeated Jasper stubbornly.

Twilight already was upon them. The forest would soon be in darkness.

"Girls, get together such of your belongings as you think yourselves able to carry. Jasper

will also take a bundle. I would suggest that we put our changes of clothing into two bags and have Lim carry them."

"But our camp dresses are in the trunks," answered Hazel.

"We shall have to get along without them, that's all. Perhaps Mrs. Livingston may be able to fit us out until we get our own clothes. This is most unfortunate. I am awfully sorry, girls. I am afraid you will wish you hadn't accepted my invitation."

"Yeth. I with I'd thtayed at home," piped Tommy. She was very frank about it. There was no beating about the bush with Grace Thompson.

"This time you will have to walk whether you wish to or not," jeered Buster. "I don't want to walk, but I am willing to for the sake of seeing you do something you don't like for once. Just think, you will have to walk five miles, Tommy Thompson."

"Five mileth?"

"Yes."

"Oh, thave me! I won't. I'll thtay right here till Jathper getth another horthe."

"Very well," smiled Miss Elting. "You may remain here until he comes for you sometime to-morrow morning. Jasper, when the young women have their bags ready you will take two

of them. We shall manage with the rest of the things very well, I think," she added sweetly.

Jasper obeyed meekly after glancing at the determined face of the guardian.

"We shall have to leave some of our belongings here. I suppose they will be perfectly safé?" she questioned.

Jasper grunted sourly.

Tommy stood observing the preparations for their departure, her alert eyes taking in everything. Especially did she eye Miss Elting, but the expression on the face of the latter told Grace nothing. Jasper dragged down the canopy top, surveyed it ruefully then kicked it aside with a grunt of disgust.

"I gueth you'd like to kick the horthe too," observed Tommy.

Jasper gazed at her, started to say something, then checked himself. Margery and Hazel giggled. The man finally picked up the bags and stood sullenly waiting. Miss Elting and Harriet also carried suit cases, the other girls taking small packages with them. Tommy stood leaning defiantly against a tree.

"Good night, Tommy," called Miss Elting sweetly. "Keep out from under the trees, if a thunder storm should come up during the night." Harriet, Hazel and Margery sup-

pressed their giggles. Tommy held her position, standing with head thrust forward, eyes narrowed, face drawn into sharp wrinkles.

"Oh, we oughtn't to do it," whispered Hazel.

"Never mind, dear," replied Miss Elting. "You don't think for an instant that Grace will remain behind, do you? This is one of several little lessons that we shall teach her this summer."

They walked on swiftly, for darkness had now overtaken them. All at once they heard a plaintive little wail behind them. A small figure came flying down the log road.

"Thave me! I'm tho afraid," pleaded Tommy, darting up beside Miss Elting and snuggling against her.

Then the Meadow-Brook Girls laughed. The woods rang with their laughter. They expressed no sympathy for Tommy. They were agreed that she had learned a good lesson. Tommy pouted, but clung closely to the guardian. About this time a halt had to be made while Harriet attended to the skirt of her gown that had been badly torn by the brush. Her companions assisted her in pinning it up. While absorbed in this task they had forgotten all about Jasper. They discovered his absence quite suddenly when Miss Elting raised her voice in a loud hello to him.

No answer came back.

"How provoking!" exclaimed Miss Elting.

"He has gone away and left us," moaned Margery.

"Do you think he could have gone back to Jamesburg?" questioned Harriet. "I believe he would if he dared."

"He had better not. I don't see that there is anything to be afraid of except that we might pass by the camp, which, I understand is some little distance from this road. Then again we must not get off the road or we are sure to lose our way. All keep close together. We will continue to walk on. We will call him frequently. I am certain that when he finds we are not keeping up with him, he will either return to see what has become of us or stop to wait."

For a full half hour they continued on their way, stumbling, catching their feet in vines that had trailed across the road occasionally, bumping into trees, but never once wholly getting off the log road. Now and then the call of a night bird fluttering from a tree near at hand, would send Margery and Tommy into a sudden panic. There are many weird sounds to be heard in the forest at night. It seemed as though the travelers heard them all. Had their guardian not been with them, at least two

of the girls would have been hysterical. Harriet appeared undisturbed and Hazel held herself very well in hand. But all at once there came a sudden interruption that threatened at the moment to send them all fleeing for safety.

Margery who was walking to one side of the road and slightly in advance of Miss Elting, uttered a piercing scream. They heard her fall.

"Help, oh help!" cried Margery, terrified.

Harriet darted forward to her companion's assistance. She stumbled over something that moved and tried to push her aside. Harriet thrust out both hands and grappled with the object. She grasped a handful of hair.

"It's an animal!" cried the girl, tugging with all her might. "Quick! Help!"

Miss Elting ran forward, now really alarmed, the frightened Tommy still clinging to her skirts. Then came a voice, a male voice raised in angry protest.

"Leggo my whiskers, consarn ye!" it shouted. "Leggo, I tell ye. It's Jasper."

There followed a scuffle and a fall, as Jasper in trying to rise from the suit cases that he had been carrying, fell over them. He landed on his back, shouting angrily. Harriet sat down in the road overcome by a sudden weakness, then she laughed. The other girls, now

that the tension had snapped, were laughing also, all except Tommy who was so frightened that she could not say a word.

"Jasper, what do you mean by frightening us in this manner?" demanded Miss Elting severely. "First, you run away from us then you frighten us nearly out of our wits."

"Yaas. Mebby ye think it's fun to pull a man's whiskers out when he ain't looking. I sot down here on them bags to rest. I was waitin' for ye to come up seein' as I'd got ahead. Then one of 'em had to come blundering along and fall over me. Before I knowd what had hit me, the other—I don't know who she is in the dark—lighted on my whiskers like a pesky mosquito," complained the driver.

Harriet ceased her laughing at once. She got up, stepping carefully over to the place where the driver was standing nursing his injured whiskers.

"It was I who pulled your whiskers, Mr. Jasper," she said. "I am so sorry. But—but I thought you were some sort of animal and—and——"

Harriet's concluding words were lost in a shout of laughter from the girls.

There was nothing more to be said. Harriet felt so humiliated that she was glad they were unable to see her face.

"Jasper!" commanded Miss Elting sharply. "I shall require you to keep just ahead of us within sound of our voices even though you cannot see us in the darkness. How far are we from the camp?"

"Three miles," answered the man sourly.

Tommy groaned.

"My feet are giving out," she complained.

"Let me help you along," said Harriet, placing an arm about her little companion. "Try to forget your tired feet."

"I've a pain in my neck too. I might forget the pain in my neck but the pain in my feet ith there to thtay."

"Never mind, we shall be at Camp Wau-Wau in a couple of hours, then we will have something to eat and you will go to bed and sleep. Isn't it all perfectly delightful, dear?" comforted Harriet.

"Yeth, it ith fine. Tho fine you can't thee it," agreed Tommy dolefully.

It was a trying journey at best. They had lost all track of time, not being able to consult their watches in the dark. Jasper had no matches and he was very irritable, which perhaps was not surprising in view of the fact that he had lost his horse and wrecked a wagon for which he undoubtedly would be called upon to pay, as it did not belong to him. After a time

they gave up trying to obtain information from Jasper.

The dull glow of a fire through the trees gave them the first inkling that they were nearing their destination. Tommy was being fairly lifted along by Harriet. The latter did not complain at supporting the girl and the suit case, but her arms ached from the exertion.

"There's the camp, dear," encouraged Harriet.

"Camp's a mile down the path," growled Jasper, bringing a groan from Margery and Grace. "That's the fire the girls built up so that we shouldn't go past the path."

"That was thoughtful," exclaimed Harriet. The building of the fire made quite an impression on her. This impression was strengthened when upon reaching the low fire she observed that all leaves and combustible matter had been raked away to a safe distance from the fire so that the forest might not be fired by the blaze. It was her first lesson in woodcraft on this eventful journey into the big forest.

They followed a dark path that wound in and out, a gloomy aisle in the great forest with the tops of the trees over their heads, so high as almost to be lost to view even in daylight, Margery puffing, Tommy uttering little moans now and then so that her companions might

know of her misery. That last stretch along the narrow path seemed an endless journey. Then too, it will be recalled that the Meadow-Brook Girls had had nothing to eat since morning except the cold luncheon served by Miss Elting.

"There is the camp, girls," cried the latter some thirty minutes later as a second glow off to the left attracted her attention. "I am right, am I not, Jasper?"

Jasper grunted an affirmative, then led the way to Mrs. Livingston's tent, at Miss Elting's direction. It was the only tent with a light to be seen. The other tents were lost in the shadows of the forest, and the girls who were occupying them were lost in dreamland.

"Keep very quiet so you will not awaken any one," cautioned the guardian as they approached the Chief Guardian's tent, rapping gently on the tent pole. The flap was drawn quickly back. Mrs. Livingston welcomed the wanderers warmly.

The camp life of the Meadow-Brook Girls had really begun. Its activities and excitement were to begin within a few hours from the time of their arrival.

CHAPTER VI

TAKING THEIR FIRST DEGREE

"BUT my dears," cried Mrs. Livingston, a sweet-faced, motherly woman. "What could have occurred?"

It was not strange that she should express amazement, for the condition of the clothes of the Meadow-Brook Girls would have attracted attention anywhere. She stood back surveying them anxiously. All were more or less dishevelled. Tommy's blonde hair had fallen about her shoulders in tangled locks; Margery had burst most of the buttons off her blouse when she fell over Jasper; Harriet's blue gingham frock had been sadly demolished on her journey at the end of the rein behind the frightened horse; Hazel found difficulty in keeping her hair out of her face; besides which, both she and Miss Elting looked tired and worn.

"We had an accident," explained Miss Elting. "But we overcame all difficulties finally."

"I'm the only one that wath overcome," lisped Grace. "It wathn't the difficultieth, it wath mythelf. And, Mithith Livingsthton, Harriet pulled out some of Jathperth whithkerth. Wathn't that funny?"

"You had better leave the explanation to me," suggested Miss Elting, who then went on to explain what had occurred on their journey to the Pocono Woods, Mrs. Livingston listening with wide open eyes.

"Oh, I am so sorry, my dears," comforted the elderly woman after having heard the story of their experiences. "But you surely did show pluck. That is proper. A Camp Girl must be resourceful and brave under all circumstances."

"Yeth ma'am. Pleathe tell that to Buthter. She ith a 'fraid cat."

"My dear Miss Thompson, that is not the way a Camp Girl should speak of any of her companions. However, I will forgive you this time. Are you hungry? You must be after that long walk."

"We had a light luncheon on the way out," answered Miss Elting.

"All of you come with me to the cook tent at once. But I warn, you it will be a luncheon of such as we can put our hands on. I do not wish to wake the workers at this hour."

They passed by a long row of darkened tents on their way to the cook tent located well down the street, which was a street in name only.

"I have assigned you and Miss Thompson to this tent, Miss Burrell," said the Chief

Guardian. "You will be introduced to your tentmates in the morning. Here we are."

The cook tent was filled with long tables running lengthways of the tent. Everything was bright and clean with a strong odor of pine in the air.

"My! That odor of pine does give one an appetite," laughed Miss Elting. "What may we do to assist you?"

"You may make the coffee while I get together some things to eat," directed Mrs. Livingston. "You will find the coffee-pot and coffee can beside it on the second shelf to the right. I think there is still fire in the stove. I had it kept up until late rather expecting that you would come in hungry. I shall have to talk with Jasper. His attitude was inexcusable."

Miss Elting having turned her attention to the fire, Harriet promptly reached for the coffee-pot and in a short time had the coffee boiling. Hazel took the food from Mrs. Livingston, placing it on the table and arranging the places for the party.

"Very well done, young ladies," approved Mrs. Livingston, whose keen eyes had missed nothing of the preparations. "That is as it should be with a Camp Girl. I am afraid it will be useless to suggest that you eat as lightly as possible. You must be famished, but re-

member you will be going to bed very shortly after your meal."

They promised her that they would heed her suggestion. All did so save Grace who ate heavily. Mrs. Livingston regarded the little girl with an amused smile. She already knew Tommy better than Tommy even knew herself. To take their attention from their eating in a measure, Mrs. Livingston told them something of the life of the camp with reference to themselves.

"After you have filled out and signed the blanks to-morrow you will be full fledged members of the Camp Girls' Association. Each of you will have attained your first rank. You will be known as Wood Gatherers and the emblem of your rank will be the crossed fagots on the sleeves of your blouses. By the way, Miss Elting, have they been supplied with the uniform?"

"Yes. Their clothes are in their trunks. We were obliged to leave them at the station."

Mrs. Livingston nodded.

"Jasper will bring them over to-morrow—provided he has found his horse by that time," she added with a half smile.

"Do we have to gather wood?" questioned Grace.

"Sometimes. We all have to do our parts in

this community. The young women of the organization do the cooking and the sweeping for the entire camp. They are divided into squads. All this is arranged by themselves. Those who are doing the work for the day are called the Workers. You will have to be up and ready for your duties by six o'clock in the morning when you are Workers."

"Oh, my goodneth, I couldn't do that," exclaimed Grace.

"Each girl must do her part. The rules of the camp will be explained to you to-morrow. But I am quite sure the Meadow-Brook Girls will make a delightful addition to Camp Wau-Wau."

"We shall do our best, Mrs. Livingston," Harriet assured her with eyes fixed on the face of the Chief Guardian.

"I am sure that you will," was the reply. "Miss Burrell, you and Miss Thompson will occupy cots in the tent I showed to you as we passed along. Your tentmates will be Patricia Scott and Cora Kidder. We are obliged to place four girls in a tent now when we have so many of them with us, later on two girls may arrange to occupy one tent if they desire to do so, though the request is seldom made. Breakfast will begin at seven o'clock. We like to have all our girls on hand promptly at that

hour. Miss Brown and Miss Holland will be your tentmates for the present, Miss Elting. I think as soon as possible I shall place the Meadow-Brook Girls in one tent. Would that please you?"

"Yes, indeed," cried the girls.

"Yeth, thank you. We're a clothe corporation, ath my father would thay."

"Grace's father is a lawyer," explained Miss Elting with a smile.

"I observe that she exhibits quite a legal trend of mind," laughed the Chief Guardian. "Now if you have finished eating I will show you to your tents. Have you any other changes of clothes for to-morrow morning?"

Harriet said they had not. The Chief said she would try to borrow a skirt for Harriet. The other girls' clothes were in somewhat better condition, and would do, even though Sunday was a partial dress up day at Camp Wau-Wau.

Carrying her lantern Mrs. Livingston led the way first to the tent that Miss Elting and the two girls were to occupy. The other occupant of this tent did not wake up. Hers was a sound sleep, induced by hours full of activity and enjoyment in the fragrant woods.

When they entered the next tent, however, Harriet caught a glimpse of a pair of bright

eyes peering at them from above the blankets. The eyes closed almost instantly and the sound of regular breathing came from that cot.

Harriet smiled to herself. She glanced quickly at Tommy who almost imperceptibly closed and opened one eye. Quick-witted, Tommy had not missed the little scene. Harriet wanted to laugh, but instead her face wore a grave expression as she listened to Mrs. Livingston explaining how they were expected to air their blankets out in the open in the morning, then after breakfast make their beds and care for their tents.

Each girl had a locker, this being nothing more than a series of hooks set into the lower ridge plate of the tent, and on which they were supposed to hang their clothes. A curtain covered this locker or clothes press. There was one washstand for each pair of girls. They provided their own towels. In the case of the Meadow-Brook Girls, their towel rack was empty, but each had a pair in the suit cases, together with other necessary toilet articles.

Miss Elting had been left to look after Margery and Hazel. Mrs. Livingston remained in the tent with Harriet and Tommy, until they had prepared for bed and finally tumbled into their cots. Then the Chief Guardian bade each of them good night.

"Pleasant dreams, my dears," she said, and left the tent taking the lantern with her, leaving the interior of the place in darkness. For a few moments the two girls lay quiet, then Harriet heard Tommy calling to her in a loud whisper.

"What is it?" asked Harriet.

"I'm afraid."

"Afraid of what?"

"Everything. It ith tho thpooky in here. Thay, can't we lock the door?"

"There is no door to lock. Don't whisper so loudly. You will awaken the other girls," warned Harriet.

"May I come over in your bed?"

"Indeed you may not. Tommy, do go to sleep. I can hardly keep my eyes open."

Silence reigned in the tent for several minutes, then Tommy began another plaintive whisper.

"Thay, Harriet."

"Oh, Tommy, please," begged Harriet. "What is the trouble?"

"I'm afraid."

"There is nothing to fear. What are you afraid of?"

"Bearth."

"There are no bears in this part of the country. I'm ashamed to see you such a coward."

"You can't thee me at all. It ith too dark," retorted Grace. "What ith that? Thomebody whithpered."

Harriet Burrell did not answer, for she was sound asleep by this time. Tommy lay there staring into the darkness until her eyelids grew heavy. They drooped and drooped, finally closing over her eyes altogether. But she had no more than dropped into a doze when she came to a sitting posture wide awake. Something had disturbed her. Something was moving in the tent and she could almost feel it.

Tommy's eyes grew wide with terror.

"Harriet!" she whispered. "Harriet!" This time the whisper was a little louder, but there was no answer to the appeal. Then a most terrifying thing occurred. A low, deep growl sounded right at the head of Tommy's cot. With a wild cry the terrified little girl landed in the middle of the floor.

CHAPTER VII

TOMMY HAS A NIGHTMARE

HARRIET rousing herself from a sound sleep, did not know where she was for the moment. Tommy's cries of alarm however, soon brought Harriet to a realization

of her surroundings. The girl bounded from her bed.

"Tommy, oh, Tommy! What is it?"

Tommy fairly flew to what she supposed was the cot of her companion and threw herself full force upon it. She fell upon a soft body.

"Get off! Get into your own bed. What do you mean by jumping on me?" demanded an angry voice that Grace even in her great fright, knew at once did not belong to her companion. "Get out of here!" The words were accompanied by a violent push. Tommy Thompson was thrown from the cot to the floor, on which she landed heavily.

"Thave me!" she screamed. "Oh, thave me!"

"You get in here again and I will call the guardian," declared the girl into whose cot Tommy had thrown herself.

"I heard thomething growl," shivered Tommy.

"It is the supper you ate," suggested Harriet. "I don't wonder you heard growls. You ate more than any of the rest of us."

"She's haunted," suggested the girl on the cot. Then suddenly she whispered: "Sh-h-h-h!"

A guardian came hurrying into the tent, holding a lantern above her head. Neither Harriet

nor Tommy had seen her before. Tommy sat in the middle of the floor the picture of woe. Harriet stood near by with a look of deep concern in her eyes.

"Young ladies, I am amazed," exclaimed the guardian. "Miss Kidder, what is the meaning of this?"

"I don't know. Patricia had some difficulty with one of these girls," was the reply.

"She jumped on me," answered Patricia. "I don't know what for, but she knocked the breath right out of me."

"You are the new girls, are you not?" asked the guardian, turning abruptly to Harriet and Grace.

"Yes, we are the Meadow-Brook Girls," answered Harriet.

"What appears to be the trouble?"

"Something startled my friend. What was it, Grace, dear?"

"Thome—thomething growled perfectly awful. It wath right by the head of my bed. It thounded like a wild animal," explained Grace wide-eyed. "Yeth, and I could hear it'th teeth thnap. It wath going to bite me."

"Nonsense, child. You were dreaming. Did you have a late supper?"

"We ate supper, after midnight," explained Harriet.

"That accounts for it. Get back into bed, at once, girls. I am Miss Partridge, your guardian."

"I am Harriet Burrell. This is Grace Thompson," introduced Harriet, as she slipped back into her cot.

"Now that I understand I shall not be alarmed again," said the guardian. "I trust you will be quiet, Miss Thompson. Remember you are disturbing others when you permit yourself to raise your voice."

"Yeth'm," answered Tommy. The guardian tucked her into bed, then left the tent.

"Don't you dare to jump on me again," warned Cora in a low voice.

"She didn't mean to," answered Harriet. "I am sure Grace is sorry that she disturbed you."

"Yeth. Beg your pardon," said Grace. "But what wath it that growled at me?"

"I tell you, you're haunted," answered Cora. Tommy snuggled down trembling. She had begun to believe that she was haunted. After this interruption the girls slept soundly until late in the night, when all those in that part of the camp were again aroused by a series of piercing screams and cries for help. The cries sounded from the tent occupied by Harriet and Tommy. Not only Miss Partridge, but the Chief Guardian came running to the scene.

The interior of the tent was in an uproar, but as the guardians neared the scene they were alarmed to discover that the cries came from without rather than from within the tent.

Then a further startling discovery was made. A little white clad figure crouched on the ground a few feet outside the entrance to the tent. She was screaming with terror. Beside her was Harriet Burrell, shaking the screaming Tommy.

"Stop it! Stop it!" commanded Harriet.

"Yes, please do. You will have the camp in an uproar," commanded Mrs. Livingston. "Come inside at once. Miss Burrell, will you kindly assist your friend in? Miss Partridge tells me this young woman raised a disturbance once before this evening. I fear the late supper was too much for her. Now, my dear," added the Chief Guardian kindly. "Tell me all about it."

Tommy sat terror-stricken on the edge of her cot. Patricia Scott and Cora Kidder likewise were sitting on the edges of their cots. They did not appear to be frightened. They looked bored and disgusted.

"It wath the motht terrible thing," breathed Grace.

"You must have been dreaming. But tell me, what you think you saw," urged Mrs. Livingston.

"I didn't think I thaw it. I did thee it," declared Tommy firmly.

"You were dreaming, Tommy. You know you were," said Harriet, but Tommy shook her head with emphasis.

"It wath a big pink elephant. I thaw him. He walked right in at that door. Then—then—then—he thtepped up on the cot and walked on me with hith feet. He wath jutht going to thtep on my face when I cried out."

"Nightmare," smiled Miss Partridge.

"It wath not," protested Grace. "Wait! When I cried out the pink elephant put hith trunk right around my neck. Look! You'll thee the mark of the trunk on my neck now."

"Nonsense! There is no mark there, dear," soothed Harriet.

"I gueth I know! It ith my neck. Then the pink elephant lifted me right up. He wath growling jutht like a bear all the time. Then he carried me right out doorth and dropped me on the ground. I heard thome thrange thingth too. I heard feet and wingth in the air. I thaw thome awful thingth, and——"

"My dear, you have a wonderful imagination," declared Mrs. Livingston, laughing. "And what is more and worse still, you have eaten too heavily. I shall see to it that you do not indulge in any late repasts after this."

"Then pleathe tell me, how did I get out doorth?" demanded Tommy triumphantly. This was something of a poser. Harriet said Grace did not appear to be fully awake when she reached her little companion.

"What do you know about this?" questioned the guardian, turning to Patricia Scott.

"Nothing, whatever," replied Patricia.

"Neither do I," answered Cora Kidder. "I was awakened by a great uproar for the second time to-night. The noise at first sounded right here in the tent, then when I had sat up on my cot I discovered that it was outside. I hurried out thinking I might be needed. I found that young woman shaking the little one. That is all I know about it, Miss Partridge."

"I am sorry that you have been so disturbed," said Mrs. Livingston kindly. "I do not think Miss Thompson will have any further attacks of nightmare to-night. If she does, of course we shall have to remove her to some other tent where she will not disturb any one except possibly a guardian. Now get back to bed, girls."

The two guardians waited until quiet had once more been restored in the tent, then retired leaving the girls again in darkness. Tommy was still trembling, but the keen edge of her fright had worn away.

Harriet lay wide awake for some time. She heard faint whispers being exchanged between Patricia and Cora. Harriet recalled a swift look that passed between the two girls when Tommy was telling her exciting story.

"Those girls have had something to do with this," declared Harriet to herself. "But surely, they were not to blame for Tommy's having had the nightmare. Tommy had only herself to blame for that. Still, how did she get outside? That is what I should like to know. I think Miss Patricia Scott and Miss Cora Kidder could explain something of that if they were to tell the truth."

Having reached this conclusion, Harriet Burrell went to sleep and slept until morning without further interruption. She was awakened by the morning bell. Patricia and Cora had already dressed and gone out. Tommy was asleep, deaf to the jangling morning bell.

"Tommy, Tommy! Get up," called Harriet. Tommy muttered. Harriet went over and shook her until she was wide awake. "You have only fifteen minutes to dress, dear."

"I don't want to dreth. I want to thleep," objected Tommy. Harriet pulled her out of bed, causing Tommy to sit down heavily on the floor. Muttering and scolding, Grace dragged herself about wearily and began making her

morning toilet. But she protested with every move she made. Just before the fifteen minute time allowance had expired, the two girls stepped out into a glorious forest morning. Great trees towered above them, the forest birds were raising their voices in a melodious chorus, fresh, pungent odors from spruce and hemlock trees filled the air and somewhere near at hand, a stream splashed and rippled musically.

"Glorious!" breathed Harriet. "Oh, isn't it wonderful, Grace, dear?"

Grace Thompson's eyes lighted up appreciatively, then they danced merrily. All at once, Grace raised her voice shrilly in the yell of the Meadow-Brook Girls:

"Rah, rah, rah,
Rah, rah, rah!
Meadow-Brook, Meadow-Brook,
Thith boom ah!"

"Tommy, Tommy, you shouldn't have done that," rebuked Harriet.

Fully a dozen girls sprang from their tents attracted by the new cry; then they began laughing when they saw Harriet in her torn skirt and had gotten a good look at Tommy Thompson's impish face.

"Young ladies, do you know what day this is?" reminded one girl who seemed older than any of the others outside.

"Yeth. It ith the greateth day I ever thaw and I'm going to yell thome more after I have my breakfath," declared Tommy with an emphasis that left no doubt in their minds as to her intentions.

"No, my dear young woman, this is Sunday," answered the previous speaker. "You would do well not to forget it, unless you wish for a pleasant little interview with Mrs. Livingston."

"There! What did I tell you, Tommy?" exclaimed Harriet.

"I don't care. It ith grand and I've got to make a noithe. Why don't they thtop the birdth from making a noithe on Thunday, too?" retorted Grace as the two girls walked slowly toward the cook tent with the eyes of the camp upon them.

"Yes, she is a perfect fright," suddenly declared a voice that Harriet recognized as belonging to Patricia Scott. "I should not think Mrs. Livingston would permit her to parade about in that gown."

Harriet's face flushed, but she did not even turn her head. Tommy fortunately had not caught the words, for which Harriet was thankful. She knew that Tommy would have resented the remark and made a scene there and then. The two girls entered the cook tent with

some forty other girls following on slowly behind them.

CHAPTER VIII

A DAY WITH AN EXCITING FINISH

THE Camp Girls stood in groups waiting for introductions to the Meadow-Brook Girls which they knew were to come. Mrs. Livingston performed these introductions. As she did so, she explained the reason for the disheveled appearance of the Meadow-Brook Girls, calling attention to the pluck of Harriet Burrell in trying to stop the mad dash of the frightened horse, for which, Mrs. Livingston said, an honor mark already had been placed opposite her name. It was the true Camp Girl spirit, said the Chief Guardian and they were proud to welcome her to their ranks.

The Camp Girls had been comparatively cordial to the newcomers since their arrival. Now that they had heard of Harriet's pluck they were especially so. They pressed forward with greetings so warm and friendly that the Meadow-Brook Girls knew them to be sincere, and this made the four young women feel at home on the instant. Harriet's face was still flushed from Mrs. Livingston's praise and

her eyelids were drooping modestly. Tommy, however, was in her element. She talked incessantly, and even had to be reminded that Mrs. Livingston was about to say grace. So absorbed did she become in her own chatter that she did not observe that the whole table was awaiting the conclusion of her talk for the more solemn duty of asking grace.

Harriet thought she had never gazed upon a more attractive scene. Flowers were arranged at intervals along each table. At each end of the tables sat the guardians, generally college girls who had volunteered their services for the summer. Then the rows of brown-faced, bright-eyed girls completed the picture. There was practically no restraint placed upon the girls. Most of the campers were well-bred young women who instinctively distinguished between brightness and boisterousness. There was plenty of gay laughter and bright repartee, in which the keen-witted college-girl guardians occasionally took part. These college girls were both an example and an inspiration to the younger girls of the camp. It was from one of these young women sitting near her that Harriet learned what "honors" meant in the camp. Every time a girl did something of merit she was awarded an honor, these being bestowed in the form of colored wooden beads.

In addition to this the girls were advanced in degrees. One day they might themselves become guardians. It was all very attractive. There were many duties for the girls to perform and many, many things to learn. Their days Harriet discovered, were not wholly devoted to amusement, but to learning woodcraft and other useful things.

"I am sure I shall never want to leave this wonderful place," cried Harriet enthusiastically when the meal came to a close and the guardian had bestowed an appreciative smile on her.

The work being cleared out of the way by the Workers, Mrs. Livingston read from the Bible out in the open, with the girls sitting on the ground with feet tucked under them. Overhead the birds sang sweetly, their voices heard even above those of the girls when all joined in the singing that followed the reading of the Scripture. Following this came a period of relaxation and visiting during which the Meadow-Brook Girls began to really get acquainted with their fellow campers.

The guardians, the four girls learned, had full charge of all forms of recreation, so that when the guardian of Harriet's division proposed a trip out into the woods, it was a virtual command. The walk was a saunter among the trees, during which Miss Partridge gave

them some lessons in woodcraft, especially on how to find one's way about in the woods. It was an extremely interesting talk to Harriet Burrell, though she already was familiar with a number of the things Miss Partridge told her. Every one of the girls who had been out on the tramp, returned with keen appetites for luncheon which was served at half past twelve. Dinner on Sunday was served at five o'clock, on other days it was served at six o'clock. At luncheon Mrs. Livingston addressed the girls on the work and duties of a Camp Girl. One part of her discourse gave Harriet a better idea of the purposes of the camp than she had before known.

"We are a self-governing body," said the Chief Guardian. "For the benefit of the newcomers among us I will say that our laws are not written laws. Young women soon recognize that if we are to have a happy, wholesome camp life, each girl must do her part well. The keynote of the whole summer's work is service. The girls must be thoughtful for one another. I cannot emphasize this too strongly.

"To be eligible to the second rank of your order a young woman must be able to fulfil requirements such as these: She must be able to prepare two meals without help or advice; must sleep with open windows or out of doors

for at least one month; must refrain from candy and soda for at least one month; must know how to act when a person's clothing is on fire or when a person has fallen into deep water, as well as what to do in case of fainting.

"The honors," continued Mrs. Livingston, "are less easily earned. For instance, any one of the following accomplishments will count as one point in the favor of the girl who earns them: Be free from colds for two successive months in the winter; be able to bring up some certain object from the bottom in ten feet of water; to know and describe three kinds of baby cries and what they mean; to commit to memory the preambles to the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence; also Lincoln's Gettysburg address. There are many more requirements that you young women who have just become members of our camp, will learn from your associates. I shall hope to see you not only reaching the next higher grade at an early day, but winning honors as well," concluded Mrs. Livingston.

"Good grathiouth!" exclaimed Tommy in the brief period of silence following the Chief Guardian's talk. She said it in a voice that was heard by every one of the girls in camp.

A suppressed titter rippled around the tables. Mrs. Livingston looked inquiringly at Tommy.

"Well, Miss Thompson, what is it?" questioned the guardian.

"I gueth I'll be an angel before I know all of thith."

The titter became a shout of merriment in which all the guardians joined. Miss Elting knowing Tommy as she did, merely smiled, but Margery blushed painfully. She felt humiliated for her friend. Tommy, however, had fully established her reputation in that camp. In future nothing that she might say or do would be taken seriously by her companions. Mrs. Livingston made no effort to correct the girl. Instead she left that to the girls believing that Tommy would leave the camp fairly well made over. She understood that Tommy was merely a spoiled child, under whose apparently thoughtless, almost impertinent manner lay the making of a charming, lovable young woman.

While they were still at luncheon Jasper came into camp with the trunks that he had brought in another wagon. He had found his horse, but the animal had cut both legs severely and could not be driven for some time. From the log road Jasper had dragged the trunks to the camp on a two-wheeled cart. Tommy spied him plodding down the path pushing the cart. She eyed him inquiringly. The girls set up a

shout when they caught sight of Jasper. He was popular in that he brought mail to them and sometimes goodies from home.

"That ith Jath," nodded Tommy.

"You mean Mr. Jasper," corrected Miss Partridge.

"Yeth."

"Harriet pulled hith whithkerth latht night. Do you know what he thaid?"

"I can imagine that he was quite angry," answered Miss Partridge.

"Yeth I gueth he wath. He thaid, 'leggo my whithkerth, contharn ye!' Yeth he did, didn't he, Harriet? Wathn't that awful?"

"Oh, Tommy!" begged Harriet.

It was a full minute before order was restored in the dining tent. At the conclusion of the outbreak Mrs. Livingston gave the signal to rise and the girls crowded out with flushed faces and laughing eyes, a group of them surrounding Tommy, asking her questions in the hope that she might amuse them with other funny remarks. This gathering was interrupted by the voice of Mrs. Livingston.

"The Meadow-Brook Girls may go to their tents to arrange their outfits," she announced. "The trunks are in place. I suppose you will want to change to your camp uniforms."

The girls assented eagerly. Tommy fairly

flew over the uneven ground. She caught her toe on the root of a tree, measuring her length on the ground. She was up and off again unheeding the shouts of laughter from her companions.

Each of the Meadow-Brook Girls was eager to get into her uniform. Tommy was so excited that Harriet had to assist her in dressing. Then when this had been accomplished Tommy swept up and down the tent, surveying herself in the mirror from various different attitudes.

"How do you like me?" she demanded, squinting up at Harriet.

"You will do very well if you fix your hair. It looks frightful, Tommy. You must spend more time with it. The way you wear your hair reminds me of Crazy Jane."

"Oh, dear. I can't thpend the time to bother with it. I'm too buthy. You do it for me."

"I will help you, of course, if you wish, but a Camp Girl should be able to do such things for herself. Now you watch me do mine. While you are watching, give your own hair a good brushing."

Harriet parted her hair in the middle in a very straight line, divided it into four strands, which she wound into as many soft coils, two at the nape of the neck and one on each side half concealing her ears. She pinned it se-

curely, then with artistic precision fluffed a few locks of hair about her temples.

"There!" she said, turning a smiling face to her little companion who had been observing her admiringly.

"I couldn't do that with my hair."

"I know that, dear. Your hair is not as thick as mine. Now let me see what you can do with yours. It looks better now that you have brushed it out."

Tommy arranged herself before a mirror. She braided her light hair tightly into a pig-tail, tying it about half way up with a black ribbon. Stray ends, like the unraveled strands of a rope were left stringing down over her ears, giving to her face a more impish expression than it had worn before. She turned from the mirror in which she had been admiring her handiwork, to meet the laughing eyes of her companion.

"How do you like me?"

"Oh, I don't know. At least it looks better than it did."

"Fine, ithn't it? Crathy Jane'th hair never looked tho well ath that. But thith dreth ith a little too thombre for one of my age, don't you think?" questioned Tommy wisely.

"I think they will forget all about the sombreness of the dress when they see your happy

face," answered Harriet. "Besides, it is the dress that all the girls here are wearing. I call it a very pretty uniform. I hope Margery had the buttons sewed securely on hers. If not she will burst them all off the first time she stoops over."

"Yeth, Buthter ith too fat," agreed Tommy. "Thay, Harriet?"

"Yes?"

"I don't like Patrithia and Cora."

"You shouldn't say that. You hardly know them."

"I don't want to. Every time they look at me they laugh. I'll thay thomething to them firtht thing they know."

"Please, please, Grace, never do anything of the sort. You might be sent home for such a thing. You know what Mrs. Livingston said to-day about girls being thoughtful for each other and always kind and helpful."

"Well Patrithia ithn't thoughtful or kind to me, ith thhe?"

"That is no reason why you should not be. Are you ready?"

"Yeth. Let'th go out and thtrut up and down."

"I am afraid you are a vain little creature, but you are a dear, Tommy, just the same," laughed Harriet, giving one of Tommy's little

pink ears a mischievous pinch after which the two girls emerged from their tent arm in arm.

The Camp Girls gathered about them. The plainness of the costume became Harriet, but Tommy did not look quite herself. Her face appeared smaller than ever, and her light hair was accentuated by the dark color of the uniform. The little girl, however, soon forgot all about her personal appearance in the enjoyment she found in talking with the other girls of the camp.

There was little to be done on Sunday afternoon. Those who preferred to do so might read. Others spent the time in lounging and visiting or strolling among the great trees either putting into practice such wood-lore as they had learned or discussing their own and camp affairs. Those girls who had been to the camp before or held high rank in the association took it upon themselves to instruct and be helpful to the younger and less experienced girls. Harriet's love of nature and her frequent communions with it, made her a popular pupil. About many things she knew as much if not more than her instructors among the girls, but she carefully avoided setting up her knowledge against that of her companions.

The day passed happily. After dinner the campers gathered about a cheerful campfire

where they spent the greater part of the evening listening to Indian legends told to them by the guardians, relating interesting experiences in their own lives, or exciting adventures, as the case might be. Then came bedtime. The Meadow-Brook Girls were eager to retire. They were equally eager to greet the coming day.

During the day just ended, they had passed scarcely a word with Patricia and Cora. The former was a girl about Harriet's age, the latter a year or two older. Cora was proud and haughty. In this respect she was unlike the average Camp Girl, making the contrast, in Harriet's eyes, all the more marked.

Harriet bade both girls a courteous good night as she turned in to her cot. They were more slow to get to bed, and a guardian's voice reminding them that it was then a quarter after nine, fifteen minutes past the time when lights should be out, caused the two girls quickly to extinguish the lantern that hung on the centre pole and seek their cots. Harriet in a half doze realized that they were talking. She roused herself, not to listen, but because they had disturbed her. But Harriet would not ask them to be quiet. As for Tommy, that young woman was asleep almost the instant she touched the cot. It will be recalled that she had had little sleep during the previous night.

Then Harriet went to sleep with the whisperings of Patricia and Cora reaching her but faintly. She recalled afterwards that when she roused herself they were sitting on the edge of Patricia's cot.

As the night advanced the camp became dark and silent. Two or three figures might have been seen stealing into the tent where the two Meadow-Brook Girls lay sleeping, but their movements were so cautious and stealthy that they did not awaken the sleepers.

There was sudden rush of feet, a smothered exclamation and a half cry of alarm from Tommy's cot, then a struggle from Harriet's side of the tent. A few moments of silence followed, after which two forms with their heads swathed in towels were led from the tent, one struggling with all her strength to free herself from her captors, the other walking along without a protesting word or action.

The camp slumbered on. Not a sound had reached the ears of the sleeping guardians near at hand, nor had another Camp Girl been awakened. The figures of captors and captives were swallowed up in the gloom of the forest within a few moments.

CHAPTER IX

SOUNDING THE GENERAL ALARM

THE instant a hand touched her cot Harriet Burrell was awake and sitting up. But to her amazement she was thrown on her back, a towel was twisted about her head by a pair of dexterous hands and her arms were pinioned at her sides. At first she did not know what to make of this sudden attack, then a warning whisper in a girlish voice brought understanding with it. Harriet had been struggling with good prospect of getting free, but she ceased her efforts at once upon coming to the conclusion that some of the Camp Girls were playing a midnight trick on her. Harriet even assisted them by obediently rising from her cot. A pair of rubber-soled tennis shoes were quickly slipped on her feet. Her clothing, with the exception of her camp uniform, was handed her and she dressed as best she could under the circumstances. Then her bathrobe was thrown about her shoulders and again the warning voice whispered to her to be silent.

The midnight intruders found Tommy, however, a most belligerent captive. She struggled violently and made frantic efforts to

scream out, until, fearful of discovery, one of the mysterious visitors hastily seized Tommy's clothing from her locker, another took charge of her bathrobe while four of them marched the indignant little girl out of the tent and away from the camp where she was forced into her clothes despite her strenuous resistance.

"They are hazing us," thought Harriet as she was led away.

That was the plan. The hazers, now divided themselves into two parties. One division took charge of Grace, while the other division proceeded in the opposite direction with Harriet and after walking a short distance came to a halt. The bath towel that was nearly suffocating Harriet was partly removed from her head. A voice, plainly disguised spoke to her.

"Art thou prepared for initiation into the mysteries of the tribe of Wau-Wau, my sister?" asked the voice.

"That depends upon what the initiation into those mysteries is. I don't know whether I am prepared or not," answered the girl lightly.

"My sisters, is the fire extinguished and the hearth left in order?" asked the first speaker.

"Even so."

"Then having been tried by fire, by the flame that thou wilt one day wear upon thine arm it is meet that thou shouldst learn the touch of

the enemy of those flames. My sisters what is the enemy that defeats the flame?''

''Water,'' answered a muffled chorus of voices.

''Then, my sister, thou, having been tried by the fire, the fire that burned at our feet this evening it is meet that thou shouldst now submit to the final test. Below thee is a pool, a pool deep and dark wherein lurk the water sprite and the wood nymph, waiting there to welcome thee.''

Harriet now heard the ripple of water somewhere near at hand. She smiled. Water, no matter how deep, held no terrors for her. She was an expert swimmer. However, the night was cool and she knew that the water of a forest stream would be a great deal colder.

''Hast thou yet earned the swimming honor?'' asked the voice at her side.

''I can swim, if that is what you mean.''

''It is well. The water sprites and the wood nymphs will lend wings to thee in thy efforts to please them. But beware. The way is far and dark. A bottomless pool lies far below thee. Art thou prepared?''

''Oh, yes, I think so. At least I shall be no better prepared in——''

Harriet Burrell did not complete the sentence. Her bathrobe was suddenly snatched

from her shoulders. Some one gave her a violent push from behind. She leaped to save herself from falling, just what they had looked for her to do. It seemed to Harriet that she must have fallen many, many feet before she reached the water, which in reality was not more than three feet below the spot from which she leaped. She struck the water with a little gasp, then stood still for a second in bewilderment, as the water rippled over her feet and ankles. The bottomless pool was not more than a foot deep.

"Is that all?" she asked in a calm voice after she had recovered from her first astonishment. "I hope you do not wish me to swim this stream. The water is rather too shallow, even for me."

"Come, sister. Thou hast been tried in the waters of Wau-Wau and found not wanting. A helping hand will meet thee where water meets earth and earth meets water. Come."

Harriet did not seek the assistance of any one in getting out of the stream, but a hand grasped one of hers and assisted her to the bank. The girl felt herself enveloped once more in her bathrobe, and her captives led her in what she shrewdly guessed to be the direction of the camp.

While all this was going on, the other party of hazers was holding Grace Thompson cap-

tive not far from the stream to where Harriet had been conducted. Wrapped in the folds of her bathrobe, the towel still bound about her head and over her eyes, Tommy stood practically helpless in the midst of her captors.

"My sisters," said one of the hazers, acting as the spokesman for that branch of the initiation party. "What is the name of the Indian maiden whose spirit guides this little sister?"

"Tommy, the Squirrel," was the prompt reply.

"Ah! Then being guided by the spirit of a squirrel, O little maiden, thou shouldst prove thy prowess by climbing a tree. Ah! The tree is close at hand. Climb, sister."

"I gueth not!" returned Tommy, in a threatening voice. "I'll thcream for help."

"Shouting will avail thee nothing. No ears will hear. Climb and all shall be well."

Tommy had her doubts about this latter statement. She knew how loudly she could scream. She knew also that they were not very far from the camp because she could now and then catch a flicker of the campfire through the trees.

An idea occurred to the little girl and could her captors have looked into her eyes they would have read there an expression of cunning that boded ill for them.

"Will the Squirrel climb?" demanded the voice.

"Yeth, the Thquirrel will climb," she acquiesced, with surprising docility. "Where ith the tree?"

"Just behind you."

Grace was turned about, her hands were placed against the trunk of the tree, and the towel was suddenly removed from about her head.

The tree was a small one with limbs hanging low, almost within reach of Grace Thompson's hands. Some one gave her a boost. Tommy took advantage of it and with the help of the hazers clambered to the lower limb. In the intense darkness she was unable to see clearly anything about her. Feeling her way, cautiously, she climbed to the next limb. Her bathrobe, however, sadly impeded her progress, but by determined efforts she managed at last to reach the top of the tree.

"Come on up, girlth. It ith fine up here."

Tommy's courage was rapidly returning to her. Then again she could afford to speak pleasantly to her captors for she was about to turn the tables on them in a most unexpected manner.

"You're all 'fraid catth, 'fraid catth and I'm going to thhow you that you are. In a minute

I'm going to thcare you half to death. Now watch me.''

Tommy did all she had promised to do, and just as Harriet and her captors were moving toward the camp, Tommy uttered a wild, piercing cry. Then she uttered another and still another. About that time half a dozen girls might have been observed fleeing toward the camp. They were running as perhaps they had never run before. Harriet was left standing alone on the bank of the stream. She was too startled at first to realize what the cries meant. All at once she discovered that the voice was Tommy's. But Harriet was considerably puzzled, for there was not the least note of alarm in the cries. They were intended solely to arouse the camp and cause the downfall of the girls who were running for their tents. So far as arousing the camp was concerned, Tommy's plan worked to perfection for girls in every tent were tumbling out in alarm.

Then Tommy discovered that she was alone, and becoming alarmed at being left out in the woods without company, she began to scream in earnest. At the same time she endeavored to scramble down from her lofty position scratching her hands on the projections of the tree in her hasty descent. Suddenly she missed her footing. Her hands slipped from the limb to

which she had been clinging, and she felt herself falling. She did not reach the ground, however, for the heavy cord confining her bathrobe at the waist caught on a projecting limb of the tree, and Tommy dangled helplessly in the air.

This time her screams were full of terror. Never before had such screams been heard at Camp Wau-Wau. Off in the camp a bell was being frantically rung. A general alarm was being sounded. Guardians clad in kimonos and bathrobes were running toward Tommy and the tree that was holding her prisoner. Camp Girls eager to distinguish themselves and earn a bead for their bravery were not far behind the guardians, with promise of outdistancing the latter if the race lasted long enough.

Guardians carried lanterns and here and there a girl was carrying a torch that she had thoughtfully snatched from the fire as she ran along. Among the torch bearers were Patricia Scott and Cora Kidder. They were among the foremost of the girls to rush to the relief of the unfortunate Tommy.

No sooner had Harriet recognized the note of terror in Tommy's voice than she sprang forward to go to her companion's assistance. She believed something serious had happened to Grace.

"Where are you? Grace, oh, Grace!" cried Harriet.

Tommy, instead of answering, screamed the louder. Harriet, guided by the sound of her friend's voice, groped her way to the tree from which Grace was suspended, and after stumbling blindly about she finally succeeded in reaching the base of the tree.

"Oh, Tommy, what is the matter?"

"I'm—I'm up a tree," wailed Grace.

"Why don't you come down?"

"I can't. I'm fatht."

"Be quiet. I'll climb up and release you," soothed Harriet, starting to climb up the small tree trunk. "Some one is coming from the camp. I see the lights. This is too bad. I was in hopes they might not know about it. Now we shall never hear the last of it."

"I don't care if we don't. I want to get down," wailed Grace.

Harriet succeeded in climbing the tree to a point where she could reach out and touch her companion. Perhaps suspecting something of the truth, Harriet moved very cautiously. She discovered what the trouble was almost at once.

"Tommy I'm afraid when I loosen this cord that holds you you will fall," said Harriet.

"How far will I fall?" quavered Tommy.

"Only a few feet," replied Harriet. "You aren't more than six or seven feet from the ground. The ground is soft. It's all moss and mold under this tree."

"I don't want to fall," wailed the little girl. "I want to thtay here. Don't you dare touch me, Harriet Burrell."

"Then wait until the others get here. They are almost here now."

"There it is," cried a voice. Harriet thought the voice belonged to Miss Elting. It proved to belong to Cora Kidder. "My gracious, girls what is it?"

"It ith I," answered a plaintive voice from above their heads.

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried the girls as they gazed up at the limb of the tree from where Tommy was suspended.

"Young woman what are you doing up there?" demanded Mrs. Livingston. "Are you Miss Thompson?"

"I wath. I don't know who I am now, Mithith Livingthton. Pleathe help me down."

"If you will stand below to catch her I think I shall be able to release her," called Harriet from her perch in the tree.

Harriet had not been seen before in the darkness, screened by the foliage as she was. Mrs. Livingston called to know who she was. Har-

riet gave her name. Then the Chief Guardian directed that Harriet should release the prisoner from her difficulty while several of the guardians stood in a circle under the tree with arms outstretched ready to stop the fall of the little figure hanging over their heads.

"Are you going to drop me?" questioned Tommy in great alarm.

"Yes, but it won't hurt you," answered Harriet.

"I don't want to. I——"

Tommy did not complete the sentence. Instead she finished with a scream as Harriet unfastened the cord from the stub that had held it and with one hand lowered Tommy into the arms of her friends. This Harriet did with one hand, clinging with the other to one of the lower limbs of the tree. As several of the girls held up their lanterns to aid the others in catching Grace, there were exclamations of admiration at Harriet's exhibition of strength.

"Who would think her so strong?" exclaimed a guardian.

"Harriet is as plucky as she is strong," answered Miss Elting.

So Tommy did not fall after all. Harriet had not been certain that the cord would hold, hence she had requested the guardians to stand ready to break the smaller girl's fall. After

Tommy had been lowered, Harriet swung herself down and joined the excited group below.

"Miss Burrell, kindly explain what you were doing in the tree?" demanded the Chief Guardian.

"I went up to assist my companion."

"What was she doing there—how did she chance to be in the tree?"

"I do not know, Mrs. Livingston. Tommy will know. I was not there when she climbed the tree. I heard her call and went to her assistance."

Mrs. Livingston did not say that Harriet's being near enough to hear the call before any of the others had heard it, needed explanation. Instead she turned to Tommy.

"Miss Thompson, what were you doing in the tree?"

"I wath hanging down."

"How did you get up there? Did some one lift you there?"

"I climbed. Then when I got up far enough tho they couldn't get me, I yelled."

"So who could not get you?" questioned the Chief Guardian sharply.

"Oh, thome folkth that I wath taking a walk with through the woodth," answered Tommy lamely.

"Young women we will return to the camp,"

announced Mrs. Livingston. It was a silent procession, except in the case of Grace, who kept up a continual chatter without saying much of anything.

Most of the girls were aware that a serious offense had been committed and that the morrow would be a day of reckoning. More than one girl in that party was shivering as though from the chill night air. All crawled into bed silently that night with expectations of trouble when morning came.

CHAPTER X

AROUND THE COUNCIL FIRE

TOMMY'S sprightly remarks failed to draw forth the customary laughter that usually greeted them at breakfast that morning. The faces of most of the girls wore serious expressions. Mrs. Livingston and the guardians were grave, speaking in low tones when they spoke at all, as if to impress upon all the Camp Girls the gravity of the previous night's occurrences. The suspicion of a laugh was raised, however, by Tommy's remark toward the close of the meal.

"I with thomebody would laugh," she complained with a queer little grimace.

"You may laugh if you wish," answered the Chief Guardian pleasantly. But somehow Tommy couldn't quite bring herself to do so.

Breakfast being finished the daily routine of the camp went on with its accustomed regularity. Not a word had been spoken about the hazing of the two new girls. The guardians were following some carefully laid plan, but Harriet wondered that no inquiry was made. She had fully looked for a searching investigation to take place immediately after breakfast. None came.

The first work that the new girls were called upon to do was to gather sticks from the forest for a campfire.

"A Camp Girl," Miss Partridge had told them, "should first of all know how to build a fire, the campfire being the family fireside when one is in the forest. It is the basis of the camp life. Being of the rank of Wood Gatherers it is your duty to gather the fagots for your own fire."

The girls were instructed in the relative values of different woods as fuel. They learned too that, as birch bark burned very freely, it should be used in starting the campfire whenever available.

Having gathered the wood the girls were further instructed in piling it to the best ad-

vantage, leaving an open space at the bottom of the pile so that a draft might be created. Each girl was called upon to lay the wood for the fire, then taught to light the fire either in windy or calm weather. One of the leaders among the more experienced Camp Girls started a second fire for them by rubbing two sticks together. She explained that it required dry tinder for this purpose, something seldom found in the woods.

By the time the lesson had come to an end the luncheon hour had arrived. There was more conversation at this meal, though it was carried on in low tones. The same depressing cloud that had been in evidence at the morning meal, was still present. Harriet noticed, too, that Miss Elting had barely spoken to Grace and her that morning. This hurt Harriet. She felt it keenly, though Miss Elting's avoidance of the two girls was because she did not wish either one to talk with her about the hazing. All inquiry as to that offense must be left to the Chief Guardian. As yet the Chief Guardian had made no move looking toward an inquiry into the doings of the previous night so far as any of the girls knew.

About the middle of the afternoon, however, Harriet saw a large group of girls gathered about a tree near the camp. The girls ap-

peared to be laboring under considerable excitement. She hastened over and after a short time managed to elbow her way close enough to see what it was that had so excited them.

Nailed to the tree was a piece of white bark. On it was written the following order:

"A Council Fire will be held this evening at eight o'clock. All Camp Girls will report promptly, in full ceremonial garb.

"By order of the Chief Guardian."

That was all, but it was sufficient to set the tongues of the Camp Girls wagging. Those who had been there for some time knew exactly what this order meant. Harriet did not.

"Oh, there'll be a merry time in Camp Wau-Wau this evening," cried Cora Kidder.

"Somebody will catch it," nodded Patricia. "Well, we don't have to cry. We were in our little cots sound asleep, as we can easily prove. Do you know," she confided in a lower tone to several of her companions, "I shouldn't be at all surprised if there were more to this than you girls dream."

"What do you mean?" asked one of the girls.

"I mean that there is something peculiar about the whole affair," continued Patricia. "What was there to hinder those two girls from

going out there in the woods and raising a commotion just to attract attention to themselves? They have been posing ever since they arrived at Camp Wau-Wau. Some folks like to be martyrs."

"Oh, I don't think that is possible," objected a girl. "They appear to be such nice girls."

"Mind you, I am not saying that they did purposely raise a commotion," hastily explained Patricia. "I am simply saying that they might have done so. However, we shall see this evening. I hope they will confess their part in the affair and save us all from suspicion."

Harriet's face burned. She had overheard the entire conversation, though she felt quite certain that it had not been intended for her ears. She walked away with head erect, a look in her eyes that might have caused certain of the young women in camp to feel apprehensive, had they observed that expression.

Tommy hurried to the tree on which the notice had been posted a few moments later. She turned up her nose after having read the order to be present at the Council Fire and wanted to know if the Camp Girls were too poor to buy paper. She said she had plenty of writing paper and declared that she would offer it to Mrs. Livingston so the Chief Guardian would

not have to write her orders on bark in the future.

This brought a smile to the faces of those who heard it, and caused them to exchange significant nods. Later in the afternoon, one by one, several girls might have been seen entering the tent of the Chief Guardian, their actions indicating that they sought to escape observation. They were not wholly unobserved, however, for there were many pairs of bright, keen eyes in Camp Wau-Wau, but those girls who did observe their companions enter Mrs. Livingston's tent were discreet enough not to mention what they had seen.

Dinner that evening brought with it an atmosphere of expectancy. It was the still atmosphere before the storm when the fall of a knife or a fork caused nearly every girl at the tables to start nervously. Just before darkness descended four Fire Makers had piled wood on the Council Fire until it blazed brightly throwing out considerable heat and a light that reached far in among the trees.

One by one the girls began to appear from their tents, clad in their ceremonial costumes. These were of khaki colored galatea cloth. They were trimmed with fringes of genuine leather, shells and beads. About her neck each girl wore a string of gayly colored beads.

Some of the strings contained more beads than others, for each bead represented an "honor" fairly earned by the girl who wore it. On the sleeve of each Camp Girl's costume was worked an emblem. On those of the Wood Gatherers were the crossed logs; on the arms of the Fire Makers might be seen the orange and gold colors representing fire. On the sleeves of the Torch Bearers, the third grade, a dash of white was added, representing smoke from the flames.

The Meadow-Brook Girls, however, could not appear in ceremonial costume, at the Council Fire. Hazel, Margery and Tommy had been measured for their costumes and were now awaiting them. Harriet had ordered the goods for hers at a cost of a dollar. Upon the arrival of the goods she intended to make her own costume. Harriet was an accomplished little needle woman. Not having their ceremonial dresses ready for the occasion was a keen disappointment to the Meadow-Brook Girls.

As the other Camp Girls emerged from their tents they stood about in groups awaiting the arrival of the Chief Torch Bearer.

"There she comes!" cried a voice.

Glancing down the camp street Harriet saw a young woman slowly advancing toward her.

As she passed the tents the girls in the ceremonial dress fell in behind. The leader held above her head a blazing torch and as she moved slowly forward she chanted:

"Blazing torch on high now lifted
Flame with magic power now gifted
Flicker, flicker, flicker, flame;
Burn, fire burn!"

It was a weird, but interesting scene. Harriet was so engrossed in watching it that she forgot to fall in with the procession when it came her turn to do so. Some one tugged at her skirt, bringing her to an understanding of what she should do.

The Torch Bearer led the way to the end of the camp street, then turning marched slowly to the campfire where she laid the torch upon the ground then made the hand sign of the early Indians, the fingers of the right hand laid across the fingers of the left with the first finger of the right hand slightly raised. The crossed fingers were to indicate crossed logs and the slightly raised forefinger of the right hand represented the curving flame rising from the burning logs. This sign was returned by the Chief Guardian. Then the two turned, facing the girls of the camp who were standing in a semi-circle about the fire. To them, the Chief

The Chief Torch Bearer Led the Way.

Guardian and the Torch Bearer made the hand sign which was answered in the same way by all of the Camp Girls.

"Thith giveth me the thiverth," whispered Tommy, groping for Harriet's hand.

Harriet warned her to be quiet. Then at a gesture from the Chief Guardian the girls sat down cross-legged on the ground. It had been not only an unusual ceremony to the Meadow-Brook Girls, but an impressive one. The real interest, however, was in what lay before them. Harriet had no idea what was to be done, though she had learned from the stray words that had been dropped in her presence, that the purpose of the Council Fire was to make an inquiry into the events of the previous evening, perhaps ending in the dimissal of one or more girls from the camp. This thought made Harriet Burrell serious and thoughtful. She was trying to decide upon the course that she ought to follow. But she had little time to consider this. She heard her name called.

"Miss Harriet Burrell will please step forward to the Council Fire," was the order from the Chief Guardian.

Harriet did so. She took her position at one side of the fire so that the light from it shone full upon her features causing them to stand out in bold relief against the dark background

of the night. It was a trying position, but Harriet carried herself with dignity and great self-possession.

CHAPTER XI

TRIED BY THE FLAMES

"MISS BURRELL," began the Chief Guardian in a slow, impressive voice, "we have gathered to-night at this Council Fire to inquire into certain recent occurrences in which you played an important part. One of the most stringent regulations of Camp Wau-Wau has been violated. The entire camp is involved, in that suspicion may rest upon any one of you. It is well to say here, that six girls came to me this afternoon, confessing their part in the unfortunate hazing of last evening. These girls are new to our order. I am satisfied that the gravity of what they were doing did not appeal to them at the time and that they acted upon impulse, though by their own confessions they had plenty of time to consider the matter before becoming involved in it. You may sit, Miss Burrell."

Harriet dropped down, sitting cross-legged like the others, with the light from the fire playing over her face and glinting in her hair.

"The unfortunate part of this confession is that the instigators of the plot are still unknown. And when I explain matters you will be quick to catch the dishonor of their actions. The six girls who have confessed, it appears, received notes just before retiring, these notes having been tucked in under the walls of their tents accompanied by a scratching on the canvas to attract their attention. These notes called upon them to report at the tent occupied by Miss Burrell, Miss Thompson, Miss Kidder and Miss Scott for the purpose of initiating the new girls. The girls who received these notes did not recognize the writing. One of these notes was preserved. I have it in my possession, but am frank to say that I am unable to identify the paper or the handwriting. Rather than attempt to do either, I should prefer to have the instigator or instigators confess their part in the affair. Will the young woman who wrote these notes, stand up and declare herself?"

A breathless period of waiting followed. There was no sound from the circle of anxious-faced girls, scarcely the movement of an eyelid. Tommy Thompson nearly broke the spell by heaving a deep, long-drawn sigh.

"Then there remains no other course for me than to proceed with the inquiry," continued the

Chief Guardian. "Miss Burrell will please rise."

Harriet did so. Her face was pale, but she did not appear to be nervous.

"Miss Burrell, you will please relate what took place last evening."

"I can tell you only what occurred after I was aroused from sleep," answered Harriet in a low, but perfectly audible voice.

"Do so," was the response.

"I was aroused by some one bumping against my cot. I sat up, but was forced back into bed and a towel or something of the sort was quickly bound about my head. I was dragged from the cot. At first I struggled, then I began to understand that some girls were playing tricks on me. I decided to let them have their way. I felt sure it was nothing serious. In fact, I enjoyed it quite as much as they did and perhaps more."

"Please continue," urged the Chief Guardian gently.

"They led me out into the forest where some sort of a ceremony followed, after which I was told to jump into a deep pool. I jumped." Harriet smiled faintly at the memory of that jump in the dark. "The water was not deep and I was in no danger of drowning. I can truly say, Mrs. Livingston, that the girls who

hazed me were very considerate. They did nothing that could possibly be considered dangerous."

"Did you see any of the girls who took you from your tent, or any of the others who were with them?"

"I saw them, yes, but I did not see their faces, Mrs. Livingston."

"Did you recognize any of them?"

"No. You see their faces were covered."

"But surely you must have recognized the voices of some of them."

"I think they must have disguised their voices," Harriet replied. "Pardon me, but do not the young women whom you say have confessed to hazing me, know who their companions were?" asked Harriet, gazing steadily into the face of the Chief Guardian.

"Those who have confessed to the hazing know each other. In fact some of them talked the matter over among themselves before joining in the escapade. Like yourself they were unable to identify the ringleaders of the party. Then again they were excited, probably more so than were you yourself," answered the examiner with a faint smile. "How many would you say were involved in the hazing?"

"I cannot say definitely, but my recollection is that there were eight girls."

"This narrows it down to two girls. These no doubt were the instigators. How did you come to be in the tree with Miss Thompson when we reached the scene?"

"I had gone there to help her. She seemed to be in trouble," smiled Harriet.

"Now, Miss Burrell, you say you do not know who these girls were; you could not identify them. Is that what I am to understand?"

"No, I do not know them," replied Harriet, gazing straight into the face of the Guardian.

The young girl felt that every eye in the camp was fixed upon her.

"I will ask you one other question," continued Mrs. Livingston. "Have you any suspicion as to who they are? Think well before you answer."

Harriet hesitated a moment, studying the Council Fire gravely. Then she raised her clear eyes to the face of Mrs. Livingston.

"I have no suspicion that I should care to voice," she answered.

"That will be all. You may resume your place with your companions. Will Miss Thompson please step forward?"

Tommy tripped over to the fire. There was a frightened look on her face.

"Tell us what happened to you, my dear," urged Mrs. Livingston encouragingly.

Tommy stammered and lisped and twisted and turned, then she burst forth into speech.

"They—they took me from my cot, Mithith Livingthton. But I fought them. They carried me out in the woodth. Then—then they—they told me I wath a thquirrel and——"

"A what?"

"A squirrel," interpreted Harriet.

"And then they made me climb a tree."

"You did not have to climb, did you?" smiled the Chief Guardian.

"I gueth not. I wanted to. You thee, I thought after I had climbed the tree I could make a big noithe and frighten them away," chuckled Tommy, squinting shrewdly at her questioner.

"Oh, a bit of diplomacy on your part?" nodded Mrs. Livingston.

"Yeth, I gueth that wath it." Tommy had no idea what diplomacy was, but concluded that it must be something to her credit, so she decided that she had exercised it.

"You screamed; then what?"

"They ran away ath fatht ath they could. I withh you could have theen them run, Mithith Livingthton. It wath awfully funny."

"I wish I might have," answered the examiner dryly. "What then?"

"I tried to get down and I got fatht. I got

hung up by the cord to my bathrobe. I couldn't get down and I couldn't get up. I wath jutht like a bird only I didn't thing. But if I couldn't thing, I could yell. Then Harriet came, then the otherth came, then they got me down and I wath happy ever afterwardth. That ith all."

A faint giggle greeted the conclusion of the evidence of little Tommy, but it was quickly suppressed by a stern glance from the Chief Guardian.

"Did you recognize any of your captors so that you could identify or name them?"

"Oh, my no. I gueth I didn't know my own name. You thee I wath exthited, Mithith Livingthton."

"It was not surprising under the circumstances," admitted the Chief Guardian with a smile that she could not suppress, and that was reflected on the faces of nearly all the girls seated before her. But all during the evidence the Guardian had been intently regarding not only the witness, but the other girls as well. She was seeking for that tell-tale look that would identify the guilty girl or girls.

Tommy was told that she might take her place again. Mrs. Livingston consulted with some of the guardians, then called Patricia Scott to the fire. There was a movement among

the other girls at this, a craning of necks and some smothered exclamations. Mrs. Livingston was very businesslike and courteous. Patricia's dark face wore a slight pallor as she walked forward and faced the Guardian.

"Miss Scott, you and Miss Kidder occupy the same tent with the two girls who have just given their evidence. Did you hear any unusual noises in the tent last evening?"

"Yes, I did, Mrs. Livingston."

"Explain what you heard?"

"I don't know that I can explain it clearly. At first I thought I heard the shuffle of feet on the floor. I was very tired and sleepy. I recall that I partly roused myself. I thought I heard some one speak in a low tone, but supposing it was in the next tent I dropped back to sleep again. I did not hear another sound until the general alarm was sounded on the bell."

"You hurried out without knowing that your two tentmates were missing?"

"No, I did not know about it then. I did not know until I saw them out there in the woods."

"Thank you. That will be all."

Cora Kidder was next called upon to testify. She was very pale and plainly nervous. She realized that having slept in the same tent with two of the Meadow-Brook Girls, a certain amount of suspicion would be attached to her

not knowing anything about the exciting occurrence of the previous night in her tent. In answer to the first question which was the same as had been put to Patricia, Miss Kidder said:

"I did not wake up, Mrs. Livingston. I—I may have heard something, but if so I—I don't remember anything about it now."

"You must be a sound sleeper," observed the Chief Guardian.

"I have been since coming to Camp Wau-Wau. I'm just 'dead,' the moment I get into bed. I was hardly awake when I stumbled out of the tent in response to the general alarm last night calling us all out. I fell over a tent rope and that woke me up a little."

Tommy laughed, but fortunately the examiner did not hear her. Harriet nudged Grace to warn her to be quiet.

"You have no idea that would give you any clue to the perpetrators of this affair?"

"No, Mrs. Livingston."

"Is there any other person among the girls who has anything to say or who can give us any information?"

The silence was tense. The Chief Guardian's eyes traveled slowly over the group before her. No one answered.

"That will be sufficient, Miss Kidder. The guardians will please join me for consultation."

The Wau-Wau Girls spent an anxious few moments while the conference was going on. Finally, the guardians resumed their places. Mrs. Livingston stood facing them again.

"In view of all the facts which we have in our possession, the guardians have been able to arrive at a conclusion regarding the six girls who have confessed. Naturally we can take no action in the case of the others, not knowing who they are. We believe that while the six girls are deserving of dismissal, they were influenced by a spirit of fun, rather than of malice, therefore the question as to whether they shall be dismissed or not shall be put to a vote of the Wau-Wau Girls themselves. All in favor of adopting some other method of punishment please rise."

Every girl in the gathering rose to her feet with the exception of Harriet Burrell. Tommy, observing that her companion had not risen, sat down hurriedly.

"All in favor of letting the guilty ones go without punishment will rise, now."

Harriet was on her feet in an instant, with Tommy a slow second.

"I am afraid you are very much in the minority, my dear," said Mrs. Livingston, smiling on Harriet. "Your forgiving spirit, however, is to be commended. It is the true spirit that

should actuate a Wau-Wau Girl. In view of the previous vote, I shall have to impose a penalty that already had been agreed upon by the guardians in case the members of the camp decided upon some form of temporary punishment. Therefore I sentence the six young women''—here Mrs. Livingston read their names out, names of girls that Harriet did not know—''to solitary confinement in their tents for the period of twenty-four hours. They will take their meals in their quarters. The young women will now rise, pass in single file before the fire and proceed to their tents.''

Six young women with lowered heads and cheeks aflame, slowly, hesitatingly rose to their feet, hurriedly filed past the fire, then turned their footsteps toward their quarters.

''Oh that'th too bad,'' piped Tommy as the last of the six passed into the shadows.

CHAPTER XII

HARRIET TURNS THE TABLES

DESPITE the solemnity of the occasion smothered giggles were heard following Tommy Thompson's remark that had reached the ear of every person at the Council Fire.

The Chief Guardian frowned, then her face relaxed in a smile.

"Did you speak, Miss Thompson?" she asked.

"Ye—yeth," stammered Tommy.

"My dear, I feel very much as you do," smiled the Chief Guardian. "But discipline must be maintained. Those young women never will forget the humiliation of this moment. In the future they will think twice before engaging in any enterprise that will cause others mental or physical suffering. There are at least two other girls and perhaps more, within this circle to-night whose conscience will trouble them, whose sleep will be fitful because they have not only done a very great wrong, but have been dishonest enough to cover that wrongdoing by keeping silent and permitting the stigma to rest on all of their companions. Miss Burrell!"

Harriet rose and faced the Chief Guardian.

"By your actions on two occasions, you have earned two honors, first by the bravery you displayed when the accident to the buck-board wagon occurred, second by your act of gentle forgiveness this evening. For each of these you are entitled to an honor bead."

Mrs. Livingston stepped forward placing about the blushing Harriet's neck a leather thong to which were attached two large wooden

beads. As the necklace dropped over her head, the Camp Girls rose and bringing their hands together sharply made the Indian hand sign.

"I hope you may earn many more honors, my dear. I am sure that you will," said Mrs. Livingston, kindly, as Harriet tried to voice her appreciation.

This ended the session of the Council Fire for that night. It was now past nine o'clock, so the girls strolled toward their tents in twos and threes, discussing the evening's inquiry in low tones as they walked.

Harriet Burrell felt particularly sad. She did not like to think of those six unhappy girls who had just been sentenced by the Chief Guardian. Her sympathy too, went out to the others who had taken part in the hazing and would not confess their guilt. It required no little force of character for these girls to come forward and admit that they had instigated the plot, knowing full well that dismissal from Camp Wau-Wau would have been the penalty. Still, Harriet knew that under similar circumstances, that would be what she should do.

Patricia and Cora already had reached the tent by the time Harriet entered. She nodded to them smilingly. The faces of the two girls wore haggard expressions which she was quick to catch.

Harriet had just pulled out her cot to tuck the blankets down when something dropped to the floor. She suddenly recalled that when she had come in after the hazing on the previous night, she had dropped the towel that had been bound about her head, over behind her cot, intending to look at it next morning. She had forgotten all about it. She now picked up the towel, ran the edges through her hands, then bringing one end of it closer to her eyes, she examined it keenly. The two other girls failed to notice what she was doing.

Harriet tucked the towel under her blankets, turning to listen to what Tommy was saying. This is what she heard from Tommy who was sitting on the edge of her cot, removing her shoes.

"You girlths mutht be good thleeperth," remarked the little girl, reflectively.

Patricia turned on her sneeringly.

"Speak when you are spoken to," she snapped.

"Yeth, I alwayth do. I thaid you mutht be good thleepers."

"Why?" interjected Cora.

"Becauthe you didn't wake up latht night when I wath being carried out into the woodth," said Tommy, surveying Patricia and Cora with half closed eyes. "It ith a wonder you woke

up when they rang the bell. I can thleep too, but you are champion thleeperth, ath my father would thay."

"Did I ask you for your opinion?" demanded Patricia, her eyes snapping, a flush appearing high up on either cheek.

"No, but I jutht thought I would tell you becauthe you might not know it unleth thome one told you, you thee."

"Thank you."

"You're welcome. How many beadth have you won?"

"I haven't won any beads," answered Patricia, crossly. "How many have you won?"

"That dependth. I gueth I've won a whole thtring of them. I did thomething that no other girl in the camp can do."

"You did?" exclaimed Cora. "I should like to know what?"

"You ought to know. I flew. Didn't you thee me hanging in the air from the tree latht night? No, of courthe you didn't. I had flown down before you got there and I couldn't fly up again."

"Tommy, it's bedtime," reminded Harriet.

"Yeth. I've got to thay what ith in my mind firtht. How long have you been here?"

"Since the first of June," answered Cora impatiently. "Don't ask so many questions."

"How am I going to know thingth if I don't athk?" demanded Grace.

"What you don't know won't hurt you," interjected Patricia.

"Oh, yeth it will. You don't know how it will pain me. I jutht have to know thingth. I have to know thomething about everything."

"And nothing about something," suggested Cora sarcastically.

"Now, Tommy, don't you see that the girls do not wish to talk to you? Don't intrude," remonstrated Harriet.

"Thank you," mocked Cora. "I am glad you have found your tongue at last. I had begun to think that you said all you had to say at the Council Fire this evening."

"No, not all," answered Harriet significantly. The two girls gave her a quick, sharp look.

"What do you mean?" questioned Patricia, taking a step nearer.

"I had not intended to say anything about it this evening. However, as long as you have started the conversation in that direction, I will, but I will say what I have to say to Miss Kidder," replied Harriet steadily.

Harriet turned to her cot. From beneath the blankets she drew out the towel and stepping over handed it to Cora.

"What is this?"

"Your towel, I believe."

"My towel? What are you doing with it?" demanded the girl, fixing an angry look upon the calm face of Harriet Burrell.

"It is the towel you bound about my head last night when you helped to kidnap me and take me to the pool where I took my midnight initiation," answered Harriet, looking the girl straight in the eyes.

She had taken considerable chance in accusing Cora Kidder of complicity in the hazing of the previous night, but the sudden pallor on the face of the girl told Harriet that her shot had gone home.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CAMP GETS A SURPRISE

"LET me thee that towel," demanded Tommy, rising and stepping over to Cora's side of the tent.

Miss Kidder quickly thrust the towel in her laundry bag and turned an angry face to Grace.

"Will you please let me alone?" she said trembling with anger.

"Yeth, I think I will," nodded Tommy, after gazing briefly into the storm-swept face of Cora Kidder. Harriet motioned to Tommy to

go to bed. Tommy decided that she had gone far enough with her quizzing and that she would do as Harriet suggested.

That night after the lights had been extinguished, Harriet lay for a long, long time, thinking over the events of the evening, beginning with the Council Fire and ending with the little scene that had taken place in their tent. What should she do? What was the honest course to pursue? The girl was unable to decide. She did make up her mind, however, to consult with Miss Elting on the following morning.

After breakfast at the first opportunity she went in search of Miss Elting, but learned that the guardian in company with another of the camp officials had started out with Jasper to go to "The Pines," a summer watering place in the woods, some ten miles from Camp Wau-Wau. This summer resort was reached by a state road entering the woods from another direction, but the two young women had taken the log road as being the most direct.

Another incident that interested the camp greatly that day was the visit of a friend of Cora Kidder. He was a young man named Charlie Collier who was stopping at "The Pines" and who had driven over to the camp in his automobile to call on Cora. With him was

his sister, a rather pretty girl whose elaborate coiffure and extreme style of dressing made her look out of place among the sensibly attired Camp Girls.

Cora was considerably elated that day at receiving a call from visitors who drove their own motor car and who were possibly more fashionable friends than many of the other girls could boast. Cora introduced her friends to several of the girls and to many of the guardians, but to none of the Meadow-Brook Girls. Tommy was interested, however. She managed to get close enough to the car to examine the gown of Miss Collier with critical eyes, and Tommy was something of a judge of clothes, for her parents entertained smartly-dressed friends from the city quite frequently. The little girl looked disdainfully at the newcomers, but made no comment.

Miss Elting and the guardian who accompanied her to "The Pines" returned about four o'clock that afternoon, having passed the automobile on the way. Harriet obtained an interview with the teacher shortly afterwards during the period of relaxation and rest before the dinner hour. The two women wandered off a short distance into the forest, Harriet having suggested a walk, and Miss Elting shrewdly suspecting that her little friend had something

on her mind of which she wished to unburden herself.

"Now we will sit down here and be nice and comfy, and you will entertain me," smiled Miss Elting. "How are you enjoying yourself?"

"Oh, so much!" exclaimed Harriet. Then her face clouded a little.

"But——" laughed Miss Elting.

"Yes, I suppose that does express it. However, I don't want you to think I am not happy on my own account. It is on some one else's account."

"Tell me all about it, Harriet, dear."

"I am afraid that I cannot do that," replied the girl after a brief reflection.

"Then tell me as much as you wish me to know," urged Miss Elting.

"In the first place," began Harriet, "I wish to ask your advice on a matter that is troubling me."

Miss Elting smiled encouragingly.

"I am listening."

"It is about that hazing affair. Suppose a girl had been asked if she knew anything about it and she had declared that she did not. What then?"

"You mean that she did know something about it but pretended that she did not?"

Harriet nodded.

"Then she would be an unfit associate for this body of fine girls. Harriet, what do you mean? You don't, you can't mean——"

"Oh, no, no!" protested Harriet, flushing to the roots of her hair.

"Of course not. Forgive me for even suggesting it, my dear. Please go on."

"But suppose that another girl did not know who were the guilty ones at the time she was questioned, and that afterwards she had a strong suspicion as to their identity? What then?"

"You have given me a difficult question to answer, Harriet. I should not like to answer it without knowing more about the circumstances relating to it. Tell me who the girl is that is suspected?"

"But you are a guardian," rejoined Harriet. "Were I to tell you it would be your duty to inform the Chief Guardian of what you had heard. Would it not?"

"My dear, I fear it would," was the reply.

"Then I shall not answer your question. I want to talk with you as I would to a friend, not as a guardian in Camp Wau-Wau. Suppose some girl had made this discovery after she had denied knowing anything about the affair, would it then be her duty to inform the Chief Guardian?"

"Perhaps it would."

"She would be a talebearer. I should not like to have any friend of mine carry tales, would you, Miss Elting?"

"No, Harriet, I would not. Much would depend upon circumstances though. I fear such a case as you suggest must be one for the girl to decide for herself."

"Would she be acting dishonorably if she did not tell what she had learned?"

"Most decidedly not."

"And if she were asked about it by a guardian later on and refused to answer, she still would not be acting unfairly to herself or her superior?"

"Wait, wait. You hurl your questions at me so rapidly that you do not give me time to think. As I have said before, you must be your own judge in your own case."

"I did not say that it was my case."

"No, that is true. However, I do not believe that Harriet Burrell could do a dishonorable act if she tried ever so hard," smiled Miss Elting. "Put your head down here on my lap, Harriet, and be comfortable. Does any one else know?"

Harriet shook her head that lay in Miss Elting's lap.

"Then let matters rest as they are for the

present," replied the teacher. "Let us hope that the girl's conscience may trouble her so much that she will confess her part in the affair to Mrs. Livingston. That will relieve you of all responsibility."

"She never will," muttered Harriet.

The guardian and Harriet strolled slowly back toward the camp. On the way there just at the edge of the camp they passed Patricia Scott. The latter gave Harriet a contemptuous glance, then coolly ignored her nod which was more friendly than Patricia could have hoped for. Miss Elting saw the hostile glance and the ignoring of Harriet's nod.

"If that young woman were in my division I certainly should call her to account for that. Doesn't she like you?" questioned Miss Elting, bending a keen look on her companion.

"She doesn't seem to like me very well," answered Harriet, then changing the subject she began discussing a tall tree that stood just in front of the tent occupied by the Chief Guardian. It was one of those spindling pines that seem to pierce the sky. Harriet asked the guardian if there were not great danger of its being struck by lightning.

Before Miss Elting could answer, the honk, honk, honk of a motor car was heard nearing the camp.

Among the tall spruce trees they made out an automobile, that had left the log road and was being recklessly driven through the forest toward the camp. It did not seem possible that the driver of the car could pursue such a perilous course without wrecking the automobile which was going far more rapidly than safety warranted. There would be a brief hesitation as the front tires came in contact with a log, then the car would go over it with a bump and a bounce, and a triumphant honk, honk!

"Who can it be, Harriet?" cried Margery, who with Hazel had strolled out to meet Harriet and her guardian friend.

Just then the car lurched into the camp. The driver put on more speed, the car circled about the camp a couple of times, then came to a halt in front of the row of tents. There were a man and a young woman in the car. The young woman jumped out and seeing Grace Thompson stared at her for a moment then throwing up her hands, uttered an Indian war whoop that brought out from their tents all those who had not been aroused by the honk of the motor car.

"It's Crazy Jane," cried Harriet. "Look! She has found Tommy."

Jane had lifted little Tommy off her feet and was kissing her delightedly while Tommy lisped "Thave me, oh, thave me!" causing the other

girls near at hand to laugh amusedly at the funny scene.

At that moment Crazy Jane catching sight of Harriet and her companions, bounded toward them. Jane was bare-headed. Her blonde hair was flying about her face and neck; her dress unprotected by a dust coat was covered with the gray dust of the highways, over which she had driven, and her whole appearance was disheveled and travel-stained.

Jane fairly flung herself into the arms of Harriet Burrell, giving her a hearty hug, then treating Margery, Hazel and Miss Elting to the same sort of greeting.

"Dad's over there. Come on and shake hands with him. He's going back shortly. You can help me unload the car. Oh, we're going to have a great time, aren't we darlin's?"

"You don't mean that you have come to join the camp, do you?" questioned Miss Elting.

"Of course, I have," retorted Crazy Jane. "What did you think I had come for? Meadow-Brook is like a graveyard since you girls went away. Oh this is great, isn't it? We'll rattle the bones of this old camp, won't we?"

Harriet laughed merrily. Miss Elting looked grave.

"Does Mrs. Livingston know—did she know you were coming?"

"Of course, she did. Dad looked after that. Where is she. She'll be delighted to see me, I'll wager."

"Yeth," nodded Tommy who had joined them. "The'll be tho glad that thhe'll cry her eyeth out. How long are you going to thtay?"

"As long as you do. Now let's get that car unloaded and start something. This place is so quiet it gives me the blues."

Margery threw up her hands in despair, Harriet smiled amusedly, Miss Elting shook her head hopelessly. Jane darted off with long strides. She had grabbed a hand of the protesting Tommy and was fairly dragging the little girl along with her. It was a strange figure that Mrs. Livingston, who stood talking with Jane's father, saw approaching her, and during the weeks that followed she was to understand quite fully why Jane McCarthy's friends had named her "Crazy Jane."

CHAPTER XIV

CRAZY JANE IS INTRODUCED

"OH, how do you do?" greeted Jane when her father had introduced her to Mrs. Livingston.

Mrs. Livingston extended her hand to Jane.

"I hope you may be happy with us," said the Chief Guardian. "We shall do our best to make you so. What do you think of our forest home?"

"Stupid place, but I think I'll will be able to start something to stir up these sleepy old woods."

A shade of annoyance passed over the face of the Chief Guardian, then gave place to a tolerant smile. She read Jane McCarthy at a glance and in her saw much that was worthy of development.

"Come here, girls, and help me unload this stuff," called Jane, turning her back on the Chief Guardian. "Dad must get out of the woods with the car before dark or he'll break his precious old neck. Dad wouldn't be worth a cent with a broken neck, so help me to get him started on his way home."

Harriet and Miss Elting were the only ones who accepted the invitation. First, Mrs. Livingston pointed out the tent where Jane was to live, then Jane backed her car down to it, see-sawing to avoid obstructions, until finally, sending the car back a few inches too far, she crashed through the tent entrance, smashing the end pole, bringing the front of the tent down over her head.

"Good gracious! That's too bad. I never

did such a clumsy thing in my life," declared Jane. "Here, Dad! Settle the damages with Mrs. Livingston. Anything broken in there?"

"Nothing particular. The tent is wrecked. That's all," sarcastically answered Patricia Scott, who was standing near to Jane. "However, don't let a little thing like that trouble you."

"I won't," answered Jane coolly, turning her back on Patricia and beginning to unload the car, aided by Harriet and Miss Elting.

By this time the entire camp was excited. The advent of this apparently lawless new girl had set every tongue wagging.

"Who is she?" asked girl after girl.

"She is a very dear friend of Miss Burrell, I believe," Cora Kidder informed them. "Some strange people come out of Meadow-Brook, don't they, girls?"

"Yes," agreed Patricia. "One hesitates to even remain in the same camp with them. I am sure my parents wouldn't allow me to stay here if they knew that such crazy girls were admitted."

Several girls turned their backs on Cora and Patricia and walked away, for Harriet and her chums were becoming popular with the Camp Girls, whereas there was a feeling of resentment developing against Patricia especially, on

account of her bad disposition and her readiness to condemn others—a trait not to be tolerated for long in Camp Wau-Wau.

Another end pole had been brought and the collapsed tent put back in place. All this was quickly done by the Camp Girls. Jane had watched the operation with keen interest.

"Say, you girls are all right, aren't you? Did you see that, Dad?"

Mr. McCarthy nodded.

"You'll have to teach me how to put up a tent. I can run an automobile and I can ride a horse, but that's about all Crazy Jane McCarthy knows how to do except to make her father tear his hair with worry for fear she will break her neck driving her car recklessly. Never mind, Dad, I shan't have the car for a couple of weeks, but trust me to stir up something else just as exciting."

Mr. McCarthy would not venture to drive the car back to the log road, after it had been finally unloaded of trunks and bags and a great assortment of odds and ends. Jane could not have required more luggage had she been going to a fashionable summer resort for her vacation. She called to the girls to get in and ride out to the log road with them. Harriet and Tommy accepted the invitation with Mrs. Livingston's permission. The Chief Guardian

thought that Harriet's influence might have a wholesome effect on this wild, motherless girl. Harriet was glad when the drive came to an end. Time and time again it seemed as though the machine would be wrecked, but Jane jockeyed her car over the dangerous places, missing trunks of trees and rocks by the narrowest possible margin.

"There!" she said driving the car triumphantly out onto the log road. "If you can't get home alone now, Daddy dear, you don't deserve to. Come back to see me next Sunday. Maybe they won't want me after that. Maybe they won't be able to stand me that long."

Jane leaped back into the car, from which she had descended, giving her father an affectionate hug and a kiss. Then she suddenly threw in the clutch and sprang out. The car shot ahead, lurching from side to side of the narrow logging road, greeted with shouts of delight from Jane, her father making frantic efforts to regain control of it, which he finally did after threatening to wreck it. He shook a fist over his shoulder at Jane, then disappeared around a bend in the road.

"Isn't he the prize old dad?" laughed Jane, a suspicious moisture appearing on her eyelashes.

"He ith too eathy with you, that ith what ith

the matter with him," declared Tommy abruptly.

"Of course he is," admitted Jane. "He is afraid to be otherwise. Let's go back and see what's going on. It looks like a regular circus. What time do they feed the animals?"

"Dinner is at half past six, if that is what you mean," replied Harriet rather severely. "May I make a suggestion or two, Jane?"

"Sure you may. Is it a lecture?"

"A sort of lecture."

"Advance your spark. I'm in on the back seat."

"You should try to control yourself here. The girls will think you unfit to associate with them if you are so boisterous. Besides, Mrs. Livingston will not tolerate it."

"What, be a goody-goody girl?" demanded Jane, opening her eyes in amazement.

"No. But try to curb your spirits a little."

"Darlin', I can't do it. I've got to be my own natural self. If they don't like me they can tell me to go home. I don't care so long as you and Tommy dear, and Hazel, and cross, cranky Margery like me a little bit."

"We do like you," answered Harriet impulsively. "We will see that the other girls do not misunderstand you altogether, if we can make them see you as you really are."

"There goes a bell. What is it, fire?" demanded Jane, looking up expectantly.

"Goodness no!" answered Harriet laughing. "That is the 'get-ready' bell. We must hurry and prepare for dinner. You will want to change your gown, will you not?"

"Change? Well, you watch Jane McCarthy. Where do they feed the animals?"

"In the tent with the blue flag. Be sure to be on time. Half past six, remember," cautioned Harriet as the girls separated at Jane's tent. Jane promised to be on time, then she disappeared into her tent.

Harriet and Tommy went directly to their own quarters where they washed their hands and faces and rearranged their hair before going to dinner. There was no necessity to dress as on week days all the girls were required to wear their uniforms.

"I think there ith going to be thome fun in thith camp," observed Grace from behind the towel with which she was rubbing her face.

"You mean with Jane?"

"Yeth, Crathy Jane."

"She is a good soul, but won't she shock some of these really nice girls with her abrupt ways until they get to know her for the fine, big-hearted girl that she is?"

Mrs. Livingston and the guardians appeared

soon thereafter, then after pleasant greetings the Camp Girls moved into the cook tent, taking their places behind their chairs, where they awaited the command of "seats." Mrs. Livingston gazed up and down the rows of tanned faces, at the many pairs of bright, sparkling eyes.

"Where is Miss McCarthy? Is she aware that dinner is about to be served?" asked the Chief Guardian.

"Yes, Mrs. Livingston," replied Harriet. "She went to her tent to make herself presentable. I think she will be here in a moment. It has been at least half an hour since I left her."

"We will be seated. Under the circumstances no discredits for tardiness will be imposed. Seats!"

Instead of proceeding at once with the serving of the meal a few moments were occupied in chatting, in which guardians and Chief Guardian took an animated part. Finally, it was decided to go on with the meal. Before doing so, Mrs. Livingston requested a girl to go to Jane's tent to bring her. Then Mrs. Livingston bowed her head to say grace.

Her words were interrupted by a lively chatter outside the tent and a loud laugh. She continued to say grace, but just as she was pronouncing the concluding words, Crazy Jane

tripped into the tent. The girl paused at the entrance and surveyed her companions quizzically.

"Hello, girls!" she cried. "You're all as solemn as a pack of aged owls at midday. May I come in?"

There was a titter at her words, then a horrified gasp as the eyes of the Camp Girls were raised to the face of the new girl.

Jane had appeared in full evening dress. Her gown of old rose messaline was cut very low in the neck, with mere abbreviations in the way of sleeves. The skirt was cut "en train," and the frock was far too elaborate for a girl of her age, even though it had been suitable for the occasion.

A little wave of suppressed giggles rippled over the assemblage as Jane walked toward the Chief Guardian with easy assurance.

Mrs. Livingston rose and advanced to meet the new girl. There was a humorous twinkle in the eyes of the Chief Guardian, but her face was almost stern.

"Isn't she a fright?" muttered Cora.

"The worst I ever saw," agreed Patricia under her breath. "I should like to see myself making friends with her."

"Young ladies," said Mrs. Livingston, facing the tables. "Permit me to introduce to you

Miss Jane McCarthy of Meadow-Brook. Miss McCarthy has not been with us long enough to become familiar with our regulations regarding dress. You will therefore, with me, excuse her somewhat elaborate costume for this once."

"What's the matter with my gown? Don't you like it?" demanded Jane, twisting her head sideways for a better view of the general effect of her costume.

"Thave me! Oh, thave me!" wailed Tommy, dropping her head on the shoulder of Harriet Burrell.

CHAPTER XV

THE GHOST OF WAU-WAU

A SILENCE so deep that the light breathing of the Camp Girls was plainly heard, had settled over the interior of the tent. The faces of some of the girls wore a horrified expression; on the faces of others there were lurking smiles. Harriet suppressed her laughter with difficulty. But Mrs. Livingston understood how to deal with Crazy Jane.

"It might be an appropriate costume for some occasions, Miss McCarthy," she said quietly. "If you will glance about you will see that the Camp Girls dress alike, and in the most

simple costume. Have you a uniform with you?"

"Uniform? Gracious no. I'm not a soldier."

Mrs. Livingston explained that the dresses worn by the Wau-Wau Girls were called uniforms. Jane McCarthy had known nothing about this before coming to the camp. Her wardrobe was an elaborate one. The Chief Guardian said she thought she might have a uniform that with slight alterations would fit Jane, but that she had better sit down now and eat her dinner. Jane promptly accepted the suggestion. Her chagrin at the Guardian's criticism of her costume quickly passed and within a few moments Jane was monopolizing the greater part of the conversation to the delight of some of the girls and the disapproval of others.

Harriet was amused to see the shocked expressions on the faces of several of the Wau-Wau Girls. The dinner ended, Harriet, regardless of the glances of disapproval on the faces of some of her companions, linked her arm within that of Jane and walked with the latter to her own quarters. Hazel, Margery and Tommy followed. For the rest of the evening the Meadow-Brook Girls chatted with Jane who showed them her frocks, told the girls how

much the frocks cost, then all at once, as Mrs. Livingston in company with one of the girl leaders came in, Jane spied three strands of brightly colored beads on the neck of the latter.

"Oh, how pretty," she cried.

The leader smiled, permitting Jane to finger the beads.

"I must have some of those," she decided with enthusiastic emphasis.

"You may, but you know you will have to earn them," Mrs. Livingston informed her.

"Earn them? Why should I have to earn them? I've got plenty of money. I'll buy them. Earn them? I guess not. Harriet, I'll buy you some more. Why, you've got only two beads on your string. That's a shame."

"You do not understand, my dear," explained the Chief Guardian. "A girl wins her beads as she would win honors in any other position in life—by accomplishment. You would not value your beads so highly if you were to purchase them, as you would were you to earn them by doing something worth while."

"Tell me what I can do to earn them," urged Jane after brief reflection.

"For instance, you drive an automobile?"

"Yes; what of that?" asked Jane brightening.

"In that line a girl may win an honor if she is able to drive an automobile for five hundred miles in one season without help or advice——"

"Five hundred miles, why Mrs. Livingston I've driven that old rattle-trap of mine more than two thousand miles already this season and done all the repairing myself."

"That entitles you to a bead, a red one."

"Only one?" pouted Jane.

"Only one," smiled the Guardian.

"How may I earn another?"

"By some other achievement such as——"

"I can climb a tree."

"Tho can I," piped Tommy. "But I can't get down again."

"You ride horseback, your father tells me. You may win a bead by riding forty miles in any five days."

"I've done better than that, too, this season."

"That is two beads. You see you were earning them all the time and did not know it."

Jane was becoming enthusiastic. Mrs. Livingston was instilling the Camp Girl spirit into her almost without Jane's realizing it.

"What else can I do to earn a bead? I nearly ran down a man coming out here to-day. Do I get a bead for that?" asked the girl, causing her companions to indulge in a merry laugh.

"Mithith Livingthton, pleathe give her a bead becauthe thhe didn't kill me one time when thhe nearly ran over me," urged Tommy.

"I will tell you how you may win two more beads."

"Yes, yes."

"You are a resourceful girl, I know. Now suppose you get up some sort of entertainment and carry it through; some entertainment for the girls of the Camp, something unusual."

"A candy pull?"

"Well, perhaps. We do not eat much candy here. However, I think a candy pull might prove entertaining even though it is not an unusual thing to do."

"I'll make it unusual," promised Jane.

"I'll tell you what to do. Make it a candy pull and ghost party," suggested Harriet.

"What do you mean, Miss Burrell?" questioned the Guardian.

"Pull candy and have certain girls tell ghost stories."

"Yes, that will be entertaining. Miss Thompson, do you think you would have the nightmare after an evening such as that?" asked Mrs. Livingston with a twinkle in her eyes.

"I hope not," answered Tommy with promptness. "Not if I didn't thee the ghotht."

"Then you may see what you can do, Miss McCarthy. I have all the supplies necessary to make the candy. I shall look for you to distinguish yourself. Good night, young ladies. I called to see if you were well taken care of, Miss McCarthy."

"Fine. This is a jolly old shack. Good night, Mrs. Livingston," added the girl with more gentleness than she had yet shown. "Good old party, isn't she?"

"Oh, Jane don't speak like that. Mrs. Livingston is a very superior woman. She is more than that here; she is the mother of us all and she is so good."

"Then I'll call her mamma. But Harriet?"

"Yes?" smiled Harriet.

"You'll have to mix the stuff for the candy."

"Why?"

"I never made any in my life."

"That is too bad. I can't make it for you. That would not be honest, but I will write down the recipe and tell you how to make it. You must do the actual work yourself. There is another thing I think perhaps I should mention to-night. The girls hazed myself and Tommy the other night. They may try to haze you, though I hardly think they will dare so soon after the other affair. There was considerable trouble raised over that."

"Haze me?" Jane laughed merrily. "Feel that," she commanded, extending a bare arm that to Harriet's touch seemed as hard as iron. "Do you think they will haze Crazy Jane, eh?"

"I hardly think they will," answered Harriet, smiling and nodding. "I should feel sorry for them if they tried."

"They'd feel more sorry for themselves."

"It is nearly nine o'clock, dear. You had better get ready for bed," advised Harriet. "All lights must be out at nine o'clock except on special occasions like to-morrow night when we shall undoubtedly get permission to sit up later."

The next day was an active one in camp. There was a baseball game in the morning, a basketball game in the afternoon with tether ball and quoits on the side. Jane was admitted to all these. She was strong and active, but she lacked the skill of her friend Harriet. The latter's playing in quoits and basketball was a revelation to the guardians who had never known a high school girl who could play such an even and skilful game. It was a foregone conclusion that Harriet was in a fair way to earn more beads by her accomplishments in the games of the camp.

Tommy with her usual bad luck came to grief in pitching and catching the medicine ball, a

large ball stuffed with yarn. The ball weighed ten pounds, and after catching it successfully once or twice Tommy failed to stop it with her hands. It struck her with considerable force and losing her balance she fell backward down a little hill and rolled into the brook which ran at the foot of the incline. There she splashed about frantically and implored her companions to "thave" her until helped to terra firma by Harriet.

The day was a busy one for Harriet and Jane. The latter was making many mysterious preparations for the evening. She had studied Harriet's directions for making molasses candy as faithfully as she could study anything, consulting learnedly with Mrs. Livingston about the quantity that should be made, but making no reference to the other part of the entertainment.

When evening came and the candy was brought out in great yellow heaps to be pulled there was excitement in plenty. Tommy followed the girls who carried the candy licking her fingers daintily.

"Have you been eating molasses candy already?" demanded Margery.

"Yeth. Tho have you. I thee thome on your fathe. Ithn't it delithiouth?"

"I should say so!" exclaimed Margery.

"Jane McCarthy, you certainly know how to make molasses candy."

"Thank you." Jane's cheeks were flushed, her eyes sparkled with excitement. She never was so happy as when leading, no matter whether it were in making candy or racing with a motor car.

The candy pull was a great success, the ropes of sweet stuff being thrown over low-hanging limbs where the candy was pulled and pulled amid much laughter and many shouts. Several trees were used for the purpose. The candy pull being finished all the girls gathered about the fire, sitting down Turk fashion.

"The little ghost will now appear among you and relate some live stories from ghostland," announced Crazy Jane.

A slender white figure stepped from behind a tree so quickly as to bring little screams of alarm from several girls. The figure was dressed in white with a white mask covering her face. Some of the girls recognized Harriet Burrell, but the majority did not. They did, however, shout with laughter when a second ghost, the assistant to the first tripped out from behind another tree with a little chirp that was distinctly unghostly.

"Hello, girlth," she piped.

The second ghost's usefulness was thereupon

ended for the evening. The girls grabbed and unmasked her. Harriet raised a wand, in this case a burning fagot.

"Maidens fair," she began in a deep impressive voice. "Do you know what a banshee is?"

"I know," cried Hazel. "A banshee is a ghost, that the peasants in Ireland believe in. It stands outside their windows at night and wails dismally. Its appearance is supposed to foretell the death of a member of the family."

"Quite right," replied Harriet. "Now listen to my story. Once upon a time there lived a family of poor people in County Mooreland in Ireland. With them lived their beautiful child Muriel. Now the fairies and the banshees, the wood nymphs and the sprites coveted this beautiful child Muriel because they knew she would make a good fairy. But they dared not approach the hut where Muriel made her home, in the daytime. At night little Muriel was sound asleep behind closed doors. There was no way for the banshees and the wood nymphs and the sprites to get into the house and take her while she slept, for there always was a fire in the fireplace. As everybody knows a fairy cannot pass through flames without singeing her wings——"

"Why didn't thhe wear water wingth?" piped Tommy Thompson.

"Every night the fairies used to perch in the flowers and under the shamrock that grew in Muriel's door yard, waiting and hoping to catch the little one and kidnap her."

"Some one should have called the police," ventured Margery.

"If the sprites could reach Muriel," went on Harriet, ignoring Margery's flippant remark, "they could quickly transform her into something else and in that manner get her away. You see these were bad fairies and gnomes and sprites and things."

"Yeth," agreed Tommy. "I thee."

"Well, one night a very powerful banshee came along and asked them what they were doing there. They told it they were waiting for the beautiful child Muriel that they might bear her away, but that they could not get to her.

" 'Oho, aha!' cried the banshee. 'I have a plan. I will call upon the friend of my people, the west wind, to blow hard. Stand close and when the door of the cottage blows open see that you enter by one door but do not go out by the other. The west wind will blow thrice, then will die away. It is for you to gather the child then. I can summon the wind but once.' "

"It thertainly had thome confidenthe in itthelf," observed Grace Thompson, nodding her head.

"The fairies and the gnomes and the sprites and the banshees gathered about the door of the shack," continued the first ghost. "Suddenly they heard a wild, weird wailing off on the moor. The ghostly little conspirators trembled with fear, for these midnight wailings, these moaning winds across the moor boded no good for all of their kind. It meant that the spirits of evil were abroad.

"Suddenly a mighty gale struck the little house, causing it to tremble from cellar to roof. Then the front door burst open with a crash. The west wind with an awful wail and roar rushed into the shack, carrying with it the fairies and the gnomes and the sprites and the banshees. No sooner were they inside the cottage than the other door burst open and all the fairies and the gnomes and the sprites were hurled out and carried away on the great gale. But one little banshee had found lodgment on a beam where it clung until the gale had passed.

"And what do you think it did?"

"Carried away the child?" suggested a voice.

"Did you ever hear of anything so perfectly ridiculous?" exclaimed Cora Kidder.

"I gueth it went to thleep and fell off into the fire," suggested Tommy.

"No. It waited until the gale had passed, then dropping down touched the sleeping child

with its magic wand, whereupon Muriel became a butterfly. The banshees carried the butterfly away with them and in their home she grew to be as beautiful a banshee as she had been a child. But she grew and grew. There was no stopping her. She grew almost as rapidly as Jack's beanstalk by which he climbed to the home of the giant."

"What a fright she must have been," interrupted a voice.

"As she grew she began to hate the banshees who had taken her from her home and made her become like them. She determined to avenge herself. This she did by making war upon all the other banshees. So powerful was she and so familiar, too, with their hiding places in the flowers that she had little difficulty in clearing the country of the little pests. Those who were not killed were driven from the country, all of which accounts for there being no banshees in Ireland now. But they are to be found in some other parts of the world."

"Are—are there any over here?" questioned a timid voice from among the girls.

"I have never seen any," replied Harriet. "Still, we do not know. A banshee might fly into any one of our tents on a dark night and change us into butterflies or banshees or something of that sort, and we wouldn't know any-

thing about it until we had been changed. When we woke up we should be in so different a form that we shouldn't know ourselves if we were to look into a mirror."

"I know who that draped figure is now," exclaimed Patricia. "It's that hateful Harriet Burrell. "Isn't she silly and presuming?"

"Yes," was the reply. "I am amazed that Mrs. Livingston allows her to be so forward. She and that McCarthy girl make an excellent team. One is as tiresome as the other."

"I have heard," continued the ghost, "that this great and powerful banshee came to America to look for the descendants of the banshees who made her become one of them. It has even been hinted that she has been seen in the Pocono Woods."

"Oh, my gracious!" exclaimed Hazel, glancing about her apprehensively. "What if we should see her? I'd die of fright, I know I should."

"Fiddle! Who ith afraid of a banthhee?" jeered Grace. "Now if I thaw that banthhee I'd jutht thtep on her with my heel, tho!" She dug her little heel into the ground to show how she would crush the banshee.

Harriet might have been observed to gaze off into the forest almost apprehensively herself now and then. There was a quizzical

smile on her face, but it was hidden by the white mask she wore.

Suddenly she cried out: "Oh, girls! girls!" Then pointed directly over their heads into the forest. "The banshee! The banshee! Look! Oh, look!"

Tommy sat shivering, not daring to turn her head. A few girls mustered up sufficient courage to look behind them. Then a series of wild screams rent the air. There was a mad rush for the protection of the tents, in which even the guardians—or nearly all of them—joined. What they had seen had sent a thrill of terror through every girl that had gazed upon the terrifying sight.

Tommy Thompson rose and stood trembling. "Thave me!" moaned Tommy. "I'm tho thcared!"

CHAPTER XVI

THE LAYING OF A SPOOK

"IT'S the banshee! It's the banshee!" screamed a score of voices.

What they had seen had been enough to startle the bravest person. A figure had suddenly appeared out of the gloom, a huge towering figure that looked to the startled girls

to be almost as high as the trees themselves, though it was not more than eight feet tall. The figure was clad in long, flowing white robes that hung gracefully to its feet. Two arms almost as long as the figure was high, were waving frantically in the air. The face was small and as white as the garb of the strange weird creature. It did, indeed, look as though it might be the fabled banshee from the moors of County Mooreland.

"Woo-oo-oo," wailed the apparition.

"Come back, girls!" cried Mrs. Livingston. "Come back, I tell you!" The Chief Guardian had herself been startled at first. Standing their ground were half a dozen other girls, among them was Hazel Holland. Patricia Scott and Cora Kidder had long since retired to a safe distance from the apparition.

The words of the Guardian somehow seemed to reassure the trembling Tommy. Then, too, she saw that Harriet did not run. Harriet had thrown herself upon the ground and was sitting with her head in hands, her shoulders shaking. What Tommy did not know was that Harriet was not shaking with fear, but with laughter.

The apparition was slowly approaching the little group of girls, with arms waving and the weird "woo-oo-oo" becoming louder and louder.

Two of the half dozen who had stood their ground now turned and fled precipitately.

Tommy Thompson still stood her ground, with trembling limbs. All at once her eyes narrowed. A crafty expression took the place of the look of fear on her small face. Then to the amazement of the girls who still remained, Tommy crept cautiously around until she got to the rear of the approaching figure. Now and then as she thought the giant banshee was about to turn around, Tommy would leap back as lightly as a cat.

Mrs. Livingston forgot her dignity and laughed until her eyes were dimmed with tears.

The little girl made a sudden dive and a grab. Her fingers closed over a piece of the banshee's robe. She felt something else in her grasp and gave a mighty tug.

There was a shrill scream from the banshee. Harriet sprang away believing that the apparition was about to fall on her. The girls fled. This was too much for them. They did not think far enough to realize that what they had heard was a most human scream and that it could have come only from a human throat.

Down came the giant banshee in a mighty fall.

"Save me!" wailed the gigantic falling figure.

"It's the Banshee!"

It was now too late to do anything toward saving the luckless banshee. The drapery fell away in its struggles to right itself and the terrified apparition perched upon a pair of stilts fell sprawling close to the fire which by this time had burned very low, else the banshee's robes might have been permanently singed.

Tommy uttered a little shriek.

"It'th Crathy Jane! It'th Crathy Jane! Thomebody thave her!"

Harriet Burrell was the "somebody" who sprang to the rescue. No sooner had Jane touched the ground than Harriet was dragging her away, rolling her on the ground, patting out the little flames that sprang up here and there from her clothing. This was made the more difficult because of the long stilts upon which the daring Jane McCarthy had walked. The long arms had been sticks on which sheets had been draped. The arms had dropped when Jane took her mighty fall and now lay on the ground on the other side of the campfire.

"Are you hurt?" begged Harriet anxiously.

"Oh, my darlin'! I'm killed entirely."

"Wait till I take off your stilts. You will be all right as soon as you get to your feet."

"Tommy has laid the ghost," cried a girl who had last run away. At this the others came hesitatingly back. Mrs. Livingston half

laughing, half crying was assisting Jane to her feet. Jane's face wore a sheepish grin as she shrugged her shoulders to make sure that they had not been dislocated. Harriet had thrown off her mask. Her white robe was blackened from the smoke and the fire from which she had rescued the singed banshee, and Margery upon returning to the scene was complaining that she had bursted half the buttons off her waist.

"There is your ghost, young ladies," smiled Mrs. Livingston. "Let it be a lesson to you to never forget your self-possession, never to be carried away by your impulses. Always use reason."

"Yeth. That ith what I did," declared Tommy.

"Why didn't you run?" asked Miss Partridge, who had remained near the scene, but at what she considered a safe distance from the apparition.

"I thaw a lock of Crathy Jane'th hair thlipping out from behind her mathk. The minute I thaw that hair I knew it. Then when I got behind her I thaw the thtiltth. You thee the light wath on the other thide. I could thee right through her drapery."

Now that the banshee had been "laid" the frightened girls could afford to laugh and they did.

Mrs. Livingston spoke again.

"Miss Burrell has fairly won an honor. Some of you observed her presence of mind when she rolled Miss McCarthy on the ground to put out the fire in the latter's clothing, thus possibly saving that young woman's life. For this you are awarded five red beads, Miss Burrell, for fire is red and fire is the enemy that you overcame."

"Do I get a bead for laying the ghotht?" interrupted Grace.

"Yes, you do," answered the Chief Guardian with a smile. "Miss McCarthy also shall have two beads, one for making the finest molasses candy we have ever eaten, the second for providing the most unusual amusement ever known at Camp Wau-Wau. And now we will go to our quarters. It has been a most entertaining evening, even if it did cause some of us apprehension."

Jane McCarthy stepped up to Mrs. Livingston, looking the latter squarely in the eyes.

"Mrs. Livingston, I do not think I am entitled to either of those rewards," she said.

"No? And why not?"

"I never made any candy in my life before. I didn't even know whether you used baking soda or flour in it. Harriet helped with the recipe and told me all she could about how to

go to work. Oh, I want to be perfectly honest about it all. Harriet suggested the ghost party too, though the big banshee and the idea of the story were mine. I don't want the beads, Mrs. Livingston. I want Harriet Burrell to have them. She earned them, I didn't."

"Fine! Splendid! You are a Camp Girl in reality now. The spirit of Wau-Wau has taken possession of you. My dear I congratulate you. The beads are yours. Your truthfulness and unselfishness would win them for you even though nothing else could. The fire-makers will subdue the flames after the others have reached their tents."

Three happy girls went arm in arm to the camp street. They were Crazy Jane, Harriet Burrell and Tommy Thompson, the latter more proud than she had ever been in her life, because she had done what not one of some forty others had dared to do—she had laid the ghost. Tommy expressed her admiration for herself that night when snuggling down under the blankets she murmured:

"Well, I gueth I'm thome folkth."

CHAPTER XVII

THE SOUP THAT FAILED

ALMOST the sole topic of discussion at Camp Wau-Wau on the following day was the train of exciting events of the previous evening. There were, too, murmurs of disapproval at the trick that Harriet Burrell and Jane McCarthy had played on the girls. Some of the Camp Girls were ashamed that they had shown such cowardice, others were angry at the Meadow-Brook Girls for making them appear at a disadvantage. Among the latter were Patricia and Cora. These two were talking it over when Harriet in passing, bade them a pleasant good morning.

"Now look at her superior smile, will you?" jeered Patricia. "I just would like to take her down a notch or two, and I will before I leave this camp."

"How?" asked Cora reflectively.

"I don't know. I'll catch her somehow and make a laughing stock of her before the rest of the girls."

"Patricia, have you forgotten the bath towel —have you forgotten what she knows about us?"

"No, I haven't," answered Patricia Scott, with a toss of her head.

"And she hasn't said a word to any one about it."

"You don't know that. Have you noticed that that Miss Elting looks at us very queerly when she passes us? She is very cold and distant, too, just as though she knew something about us. You mark my words, that Meadow-Brook Girl has told her all about finding the towel, but if it gets to the Chief Guardian I know how I can turn the tables on that impudent Harriet Burrell."

"How?"

"In the easiest way you can imagine. I'll say that Harriet never has liked me and that she had taken my towel and hidden it purposely, just to produce it at the right time and accuse me of having been implicated in the hazing."

"But it wasn't your towel," protested Cora. "It was mine."

"That's all right. That will make it all the better. She will say it was your towel and I will say it was mine. Don't you see how that will mix the affair up? You must stand by me if it comes to that."

"Of course," answered Cora Kidder, but in rather a weak voice. She was not a bad girl at heart, but she was easily influenced; it was

not difficult to persuade her to look at any matter with other eyes than her own. It was the bad influence of Patricia Scott that already had led Cora so far into mischief, and that gave promise of leading her still farther. Patricia, on the other hand, possessed a jealous and revengeful disposition. It had caused her trouble in her own home and lost her many friends in her home town. She had been sent to the camp in the hope that the wholesome life in the woods might give her a new point of view, and that the association with the Camp Girls might make a better girl of her. Thus far the desired result had not been attained, though she had managed to hide her shortcomings from Mrs. Livingston and the guardians. At times Mrs. Livingston, close observer that she was, had wondered as to the girl's real character, but Patricia's sweet smile, easily assumed to fit the occasion, had on each occasion disarmed the Chief Guardian.

"You must pretend to be very indignant if ever you are called to account, and I will pretend to be indignant, too. I almost hope she does complain of us, and she will, too. She is a sneak."

"I don't hope she'll complain of us," cried Cora in alarm. "I know I should die of mortification."

"You haven't any courage, Cora Kidder," declared Patricia scornfully. "I see I shall have to look out for both of us, and——"

"No, no," protested Cora. "Tell me what you want me to do. I will do it. I don't want to be found out for what I already have done and be sent home. What would I do? Oh, what would I do?"

Patricia gave her a withering glance.

"What you need is backbone. You haven't any more courage than a two-year old child. What ails you?"

"You say I haven't any courage," answered Cora hotly. "I'll show you whether I have or not. What do you want me to do?" she demanded, straightening up to her full height and looking Patricia squarely in the eyes.

"That's the way to talk, dear," nodded Patricia. "Let's take a walk. Forget the mean things I just said to you, but I had to do it to put some spunk into you."

"There comes that Margery girl," exclaimed Cora.

"Don't mind her. She wouldn't see the side of a house if it were set up right in front of her. I can't say as much for that perfectly impossible Grace Thompson. She is as sharp as she can be, and she isn't afraid to speak right out before everybody. Didn't you see how she

held her ground last night when most of the others ran away."

"Oh, she was in the secret. She knew all about it," answered Cora Kidder.

"That's where you make a mistake. She didn't. Didn't you see how frightened she was at first?"

Cora shock her head.

"You must keep your eyes open," advised Patricia. "You've gone too far to take any chances; that is, any more than you have to take. She was going to run, then she held herself steady by sheer grit. I don't like her, I don't like any of them, but I know real courage when I see it and she showed it last night."

"Harriet knew, though?"

"Oh, yes; she was in the game. Of course she was. It was a shame. She ought to be put out of the camp. She will be. There isn't room here for her and me."

Patricia linked an arm in that of Cora's, walking away to a spot where they might be more by themselves. There were too many girls passing back and forth now to make prudent a discussion such as was theirs.

A good part of the afternoon found Harriet Burrell in the kitchen of the cook tent. Harriet was trying to win an "honor" by making soup. By making five standard soups con-

secutively she would win another bead, provided the soups were favorably received by the Camp Wau-Wau Girls.

Harriet's first day in the kitchen resulted in more confusion than the kitchen had known that season. It seemed that everything was misplaced. The dinner was late that night, but the soup was excellent. The other girls in the kitchen made no complaint about the confusion, which they believed to be due to carelessness on Harriet's part, because the misplaced articles and various ingredients scattered about were those which she had used in her work.

The next day conditions were no different. Patricia, who was preparing salads for an "honor" finally threw up her hands in disgust. She declared she could stand it no longer and if some of the girls didn't remove Harriet from the kitchen, she, Patricia would have to get out herself. Somehow this word reached Mrs. Livingston, with the result that Patricia herself was asked to drop her "honor" work in the kitchen for the present.

It was a blow to Patricia Scott. She had not looked for this result, and though she had not made the complaint in person, her criticism of Harriet had been a boomerang that had returned and hit Patricia. This made the girl even more bitter against Harriet than before.

The following two days brought with them less friction in the kitchen. Harriet Burrell's soups delighted the girls and the guardians; many were the compliments bestowed upon the blushing Harriet.

It was now the fifth day of Harriet's soup-making; the last in the test for the "honor." It seemed a foregone conclusion that the young woman had won her bead for this achievement in cookery. Harriet naturally felt gratified. It meant something to win even one bead in the Camp Girls' Association as every member of the organization had soon come to know. No girl ever had won all of the "honors" these "honors" covering so many fields of achievement as to make this well-nigh impossible.

"Well, Miss Burrell," smiled the Chief Guardian that evening after they had sat down to the tables and grace had been said. "I suppose you will be entitled to wear a new bead to-morrow."

"I hope so, Mrs. Livingston," answered Harriet with a blush.

"Wait till you try the thoup," suggested Tommy.

"I agree with you," said Hazel.

"Your friends do not seem to have the same confidence in your soup making that the rest of us feel," smiled Miss Partridge.

"Perhaps that is because they know my shortcomings better than you do, Miss Partridge," replied Harriet.

A close observer might have seen Patricia and Cora exchange meaning glances.

There was a lively chattering along the tables while the girls were waiting for the serving of the first course, the soup. This was brought to the table in great tureens, one for each table, the guardian who sat at the head of the table serving the soup which was passed along to the other end by the girls themselves. In this case it was Miss Elting who was doing the serving at the table at which the Meadow-Brook Girls were seated.

"This consommé certainly looks delicious," she said with a smile.

"From the smell I should say it must be," declared Jane McCarthy. "I know I could die eating that soup."

"Be careful," warned a voice. "You may."

"I say girls, let's wait till Harriet samples it," suggested Hazel. "It is her last chance at the soup. There's no telling what she might do to us."

"Yeth, that ith right," nodded Grace. "No poithon cup for uth."

"Taste it, darlin'," urged Jane.

Harriet with a good natured smile dipped

her spoon in daintily, carrying some of the steaming soup to her lips. She tasted the consommé gingerly, then took another spoonful, and hurriedly put the spoon back in the dish. A horrified expression appeared on the face of the Meadow-Brook girl.

"There! What did I tell you?" cried Margery.

"What is the trouble?" asked Miss Partridge.

"Oh-h-h!" gasped Harriet, making a desperate effort to control herself.

A girl on the other side of the table from Miss Burrell, sampled the soup, then hastily dropped her spoon. Margery followed suit a moment later.

"How is it?" questioned Hazel.

"Please don't ask me," declared Margery gloomily.

Miss Elting made a wry face when she tasted the consommé, but said nothing. Some went on eating, others laid down their spoons and leaned back in their chairs. Tommy was the first to break the silence that had settled over the table.

"There ith thomething the matter with thith thoup," she declared in a loud voice.

"That's what I say," answered a voice.

"And I, and I, and I," cried other voices.

"Yes, I agree with you," answered Miss Partridge gravely. "Harriet what did you put in the soup?"

"The usual ingredients."

Mrs. Livingston at this juncture sampled the soup. Her face darkened. She swallowed a spoonful, then quickly laid the spoon on the soup plate.

Harriet had shrunk back into her chair. A deep flush rose to her face. To cover her confusion she essayed to take some more soup, but the effort was a failure. She simply could not eat the consommé.

"It tathteth to me like thoap," declared Tommy.

"I believe it is soap," spoke up Patricia Scott. "How perfectly frightful!"

"I am afraid, Miss Burrell," said Mrs. Livingston, "that you have lost the 'honor' for this season. This consommé seems to be a dismal failure. This of course does not preclude you from taking up some other branch of cookery and winning an 'honor'."

Harriet was on the verge of tears, but she held herself under good control. Her humiliation was apparent only in her flaming cheeks and almost imperceptible beads of perspiration that stood out on her forehead.

"This is a matter that must be looked into,

Harriet," said the Chief Guardian. "Young ladies, eat no more of the soup. There is something seriously wrong with it. It tastes like soap to me, too; I am free to admit that. I hope no one has been playing pranks," fixing a keen glance on Harriet's face.

"Oh, Mrs. Livingston," cried Harriet, shocked almost beyond words.

"I am not accusing you of any such thing, my dear," explained the Chief Guardian. "You would be unlikely to play pranks and lose your 'honor' mark. The guardians will please accompany me to the kitchen. Young ladies, you will proceed with your dinner. Upon second thought, Miss Partridge and Miss Elting will accompany me. The other guardians may remain here."

Mrs. Livingston rose, as did the two teachers whom she had named. A heavy silence settled over the cook tent after the three women had disappeared into the kitchen, a small tent at the rear of the cook tent. They were gone for some time. Finally, Mrs. Livingston and Miss Partridge returned. Miss Elting was not with them. The Chief Guardian's face wore an expression of sternness such as none of the girls ever had observed there before.

Harriet appeared wholly to have lost her appetite. She was making a brave effort to

eat, but the food choked her. The meal was finished in silence. At the conclusion of the meal, Mrs. Livingston rose and requested the girls to come to order.

"Young ladies," she began, "a most serious thing has occurred. I make no accusations. Miss Burrell, where is the key to your supply box?"

"I hung it on a nail on the outside of the tent pole just behind my work table, Mrs. Livingston."

The Chief Guardian turned to Miss Partridge.

"Do you mind bringing Miss Burrell's key and box, Miss Partridge?" she asked. The young guardian rose promptly and left the tent. A few moments later, she returned bearing a galvanized box, slightly larger than a baking powder case. This she placed on the table before the Chief Guardian, laying a key beside it. Harriet saw that the box was hers, but she did not know why it had been brought to the tent.

Mrs. Livingston unlocked the supply box, then tilting it so that the light from the hanging lamp nearby shone into the box, she peered in. Harriet saw her grope in the box, saw her withdraw some small object and examine it in the palm of her hand amid a breathless silence.

Then the Chief Guardian raised her eyes, fixing them on Harriet Burrell with an inquiring, sorrowful gaze.

CHAPTER XVIII

AN "HONOR" FAIRLY LOST

"MISS BURRELL," began the Chief Guardian in an impressive voice, "I find that a serious offense has been committed, an offense that cannot be overlooked. A prank is allowable within reasonable limits, but any such trick as this borders on the disgraceful."

"Wha—at do you mean, Mrs. Livingston?" questioned Harriet.

"We have examined the pot in which the soup was made. We have, after careful examination, decided what it is that gives the consommé the peculiar flavor that you all have noticed."

Harriet listened with an expression of grave concern. She forgot in the interest she felt in what the Chief Guardian was about to say, her own humiliation at having lost the "honor" she had so nearly earned.

"We came to the conclusion that nothing but soap could give the soup the peculiar flavor

that makes it so unpalatable. Then again we observed little beads floating on the surface," continued Mrs. Livingston. "While attractive to look at these were very disagreeable to the taste for they were soap bubbles. However, an entirely different complexion has been placed on the matter since my examination of your box before me on the table. Miss Burrell, I find in this box a small piece of castile soap from which some shavings have been left in the box and on the paring knife with which the soap was shaved off."

"Soap in my kit?" cried Harriet, rising slowly to her feet.

"Yes."

"But—why—what is it doing there?" gasped the astonished girl.

"That is what we should like to know. No one had access to your kit except yourself. The box was locked and the key hung where you placed it when you last had occasion to close the box."

"Yes, yes, but——"

"We also found flakes of soap scattered about on the floor in the kitchen. I slipped on a shaving of it and nearly fell just now when I visited the kitchen. Did you have any soap in your kit?"

"Certainly not, Mrs. Livingston."

"Oh, Shame On All of You!" Cried Jane.

"Then how did it come to be there just now when I opened the box?"

"Oh, I don't know," answered Harriet despairingly. "But surely, Mrs. Livingston, you do not accuse me of anything so dreadful as mixing soap with the consommé? Oh, you don't mean that; you can't mean it?"

"While I am not by any means accusing you, the facts on the face of the affair speak for themselves, and——"

The Chief Guardian was interrupted by the sudden springing to her feet of Crazy Jane. Her face was flushed; her hair was disarranged her arms were raised above her head.

"Oh, shame on all of you!" cried the girl. "My darlin' Harriet wouldn't do such a thing. Never! Show me the one who did it, knowing that the darlin' girl would be accused. I'll scratch her eyes out, I will!"

Jane was in a towering rage. The calm voice of Mrs. Livingston interrupted the tirade.

"Miss McCarthy, be good enough to resume your seat," she said.

Jane hesitated. For a few perilous seconds she struggled with herself. The girls expected an outbreak more vehement than her first. Instead, Jane sat down with an emphasis that jarred the dishes on the table.

"We will now continue with this matter

Can any person here explain, first how the consommé happens to be soaped, and secondly why soap is found in Miss Burrell's kit?" questioned Mrs. Livingston.

A painful silence reigned in the cook tent. There seemed to be no explanation of the mystery.

"There was nothing of the sort in the box when last I used it," reiterated Harriet. "I am positive of that, Mrs. Livingston. Nor could it have been at the bottom of the box under the other things. Knowing that I had finished my work in the soup test, I examined the contents of the box to put everything in order."

"You locked the box afterwards?"

"Immediately. I hung the key in its accustomed place, too."

"You have no idea when the soap was dropped into the soup kettle?"

"No. But wait! Just before I came into the cook tent to sit down I tasted the soup, as I had done a dozen times before while in the kitchen to make sure that it was exactly as it should be."

"Did you taste it just before you came in to dinner? Did you detect anything wrong with it, Miss Burrell?"

"There was nothing wrong with it then. I

mean—you know what I mean. There was none of this soapy taste in it at all. To me it tasted delicious. The first I realized that something had happened to the consommé, was when I took a spoonful of it at the table here. Then I knew something was wrong with it. That is all I can tell you. But you must know that I would not do a thing like that, Mrs. Livingston. Please don't say that you think I might be guilty of any such thing. Do you think I would spoil my chance of winning an 'honor' for the sake of playing a contemptible trick?"

"No, Harriet, I do not think you would," decided Mrs. Livingston after gazing steadily into the troubled eyes of Harriet Burrell for a moment.

Harriet caught her breath sharply.

"It ith a mean thhame," declared Tommy in a voice that reached every person in the tent. "I gueth the banshee mutht have done it."

A chorus of giggles greeted this sally. The laughter was suppressed by the Chief Guardian.

"We will leave the mystery of the doctored soup as it stands until after breakfast to-morrow morning," announced Mrs. Livingston. "After that, if the guilty girl makes no confession in the meantime, we shall begin an investigation of our own."

The Chief Guardian rose, the girls doing likewise, after which they filed out of the tent. Once outside they began to talk excitedly. Most of them took sides with Harriet Burrell. They did not believe she could have been guilty of such a trick. Besides, she would be defeating her own ambitions if she did do so. She was certain to lose the coveted "honor." Despite this, however, there were those who did believe that Harriet had put soap in the consommé.

It had been an evening full of excitement and unexpected happenings. And now Harriet Burrell would not have another opportunity to win her "honor" in this line until three months had passed.

Harriet's face was stony as she fled to her tent. Jane McCarthy reached the tent a few minutes behind her friend. Jane threw her arms about Harriet, expressing her opinion of the whole affair in her own hot-headed way. Harriet's eyes were dry but her cheeks were hot. She was holding herself well in hand, yet when she spoke there was a slight quaver in her voice. She was not a girl given to tears.

"I don't care for the 'honor' so much," Harriet said, "but I just can't stand it to have the girls believing deep down in their hearts that I could have done that awful thing. They will say it; at least some of them will."

"I dare them to!" flamed Jane. "Just let me hear them. Oh, just let me hear one girl saying a word about Harriet Burrell. Oh!"

"I don't want you to mix in this trouble at all, Jane," objected Harriet. "It is bad enough as it is. If I could find out who the guilty one is——"

"What would you do if you did find out?" demanded Jane.

"I don't know. Nothing I suppose," returned Harriet with a wan smile.

"That's just it. You've got to fight if you don't want to get walked on in this world. My dad says so. He's a fighter, he is, little one, and he has a daughter who can take her own part and half a dozen other people's besides. My sleeves will be rolled up all the time after this. You watch me get into action when I discover the girl, and——"

"I think you had better leave all that to me, Miss McCarthy," advised a voice at the door of the tent.

At the first sound of the voice Harriet thought either Patricia or Cora had come in. Then she saw that it was Mrs. Livingston.

"Please don't involve yourself in difficulties, my dear. Now, will you leave us, please? I wish to speak alone with Miss Burrell."

Jane went outside the tent where she paced

up and down waiting until the Chief Guardian should come out, when Jane intended to return to the tent and talk further with her friend. She intercepted the other Meadow-Brook Girls who had come over to sympathize with Harriet. All save Tommy returned to their own tents.

"Now, my dear," said Mrs. Livingston, seating herself beside Harriet on the edge of the latter's cot, "please do not take this quite so hard. You will have plenty of opportunity to win other 'honors' before leaving Camp Wau-Wau."

"It is not the loss of the 'honor' that is disturbing me, Mrs. Livingston. It is the thought that you suspected me of being the author of that trick," answered Harriet quite frankly. "You will understand that I am not saying this in an impertinent sense."

"My dear girl, I know of course that you are not. Let me tell you something. It may serve to make you feel this less keenly. I sought for the moment to be a little harsh with you thinking that possibly the girl who had done this might rise and confess at once rather than see you bear the burden of the accusation."

"There is little danger of her doing that."

"So I infer. But you have a suspicion as to who she may be?" added the Chief Guardian quickly.

"I may have, but I should not wish to name any one. You see my suspicion may be entirely wrong. In fact I am convinced that it is."

"My child, if you have a well-founded suspicion of any girl here you should make it known to me. It is your duty to do that."

"That is just the trouble," answered Harriet with a faint smile. "My suspicion is not a well founded one. Even if it were I should not be sure that I ought to tell you."

"I will not press you to tell me, my dear. I will leave it all to your good judgment. At breakfast to-morrow morning I shall announce that you are in no way held to blame for this unpleasant incident."

With a kind "good night, Miss Burrell," the Chief Guardian left Harriet.

Patricia and Cora were about to enter the tent when they espied Jane walking up and down.

"On guard, eh?" sneered Patricia.

Jane strolled over, peered down impudently into the face of Patricia Scott, gazing at the girl for all of half a minute.

"Yes," answered Jane shortly, then turned her back on the two girls.

CHAPTER XIX

WHEN THE STORM BROKE

INSTEAD of entering the tent after Crazy Jane's snub, Patricia and Cora Kidder gazed at the girl pacing back and forth before it, then laughing sarcastically turned and walked away. Mrs. Livingston saw them in the distance when she came out, but her attention was immediately centred on Jane.

"Miss McCarthy," she said. "I wouldn't keep Harriet up long, were I in your place. The poor girl has had a trying time of it this evening. Were the two girls who just walked away from here, Miss Scott and Miss Kidder?"

"Yes, ma'am. And I gave them a good stiff punch—I mean I told them—I let them know how much I loved them."

"Try to love every one, Miss McCarthy. It doesn't pay for one to go about with any other feeling in the heart."

"I guess I must have been born with the other feeling," returned Crazy Jane. "But at any rate, I know I have the other feeling now."

"Try to be like Miss Burrell, sweet and forgiving. Good night."

"Good night, Mrs. Livingston. I'll just say

'good night' to Harriet. I won't stay a minute."

Jane was true to her word. She ran into the tent and gathering Harriet in her arms, kissed her on the forehead, very gently, too, for Jane; after which the impulsive girl ran out without giving Harriet a chance to say a word.

The hour for "lights out' not having arrived, most of the girls were out by the campfire chatting. Harriet preferred to be alone on this occasion. She did not feel equal to talking with any one. She felt that the day had been a miserable failure. There had been two days of it. First, everything in the kitchen had gone wrong. This condition had somewhat improved after Patricia had left the kitchen, only to become many times worse after three days had elapsed.

Harriet tried to reason out the mystery. Her first thought was that Patricia might have had something to do with the spoiling of the soup. But she had not the slightest proof that Patricia was the culprit.

Harriet was at a loss to know what to do. The problem was too much for her. Her head whirled with her effort to solve it. Before retiring for the night, however, she moved her cot to the extreme rear of the tent so that the light would not be so strong in her eyes when Pa-

tricia and Cora should come in. She went to sleep, but was soon awakened by voices outside the tent and near her cot. It was impossible to shut her ears to what was being said, and she heard Patricia's voice:

"To The Pines? To the dance?"

It was Cora who replied:

"Yes. Charlie Collier said he'd bring his sister and come for me in his car. But of course Mrs. Livingston—"

"You're a goose, Cora. Don't tell Mrs. Livingston. You can slip out and Charlie will get you back before the camp is awake. The dance is to be the day after to-morrow night, you said. How are you to get word to him?"

"He's coming over to-morrow to find out. By the way, Patricia, the soap trick worked."

"Beautifully!" laughed Patricia.

The two girls stopped talking and slipped into the tent and were soon asleep. But the knowledge that Patricia and Cora had actually put the soap into the soup for the purpose of injuring her shocked Harriet into wakefulness. Nor did she know what to do in regard to the dance at The Pines. Cora, under the influence of the strong-willed Patricia, would listen to no protest from her, Harriet; and certainly she could not become a talebearer and go to one of the Guardians with her problem.

Finally, tired out, Harriet dropped off into an uneasy sleep from which she was awakened by heavy thunder and flashes of lightning.

Tommy woke and screamed. The storm drew nearer until the thunder seemed deafening and the zigzag of the lightning became almost continuous. The rain was descending in torrents, and the tent in which the four shivering girls crouched began to leak.

"Pull your cots to the middle of the tent," said Harriet. "It's not leaking badly there."

This was done, and for a short while things were better. But not for long, and presently girls and bedding were thoroughly soaked.

Then came a new sound. First there was a crash, then a tearing sound. Tommy and Cora screamed. Patricia and Harriet were both silent, but Harriet leaped from her cot. Only then she uttered a word of command.

"Under your cots, girls. That's the safest place. A tree is falling!"

Then it came. With a crunching, terrifying sound, the tree fell directly across the tent. Tent poles snapped, and the girls under the cots were enveloped in folds of canvas, through which not even the light of the lightning could penetrate. Tommy screamed. Cora moaned. Then, except for the sound of the storm, there was complete silence in the collapsed tent.

CHAPTER XX

CONCLUSION

"HARRIET, are you there?" wailed a voice.

"Yes, Jane," came in muffled tones from beneath the fallen canvas.

Fortunately, the branches of the tree had held the trunk up sufficiently to prevent the crushing of the four girls huddled under the cots. But the air was stifling, and Harriet began to fear that if they were not released soon they might all suffocate.

"Jasper's here and is going to cut the limbs of the tree away and get you out."

"No, no, Jane! Don't let him do that! He'll let the trunk of the tree down and crush us," replied Harriet frantically.

"I'll watch him, darlin', and see that he doesn't do that."

Jane McCarthy did indeed take charge and direct the rescue of the imperiled girls much as her father had once bossed gangs of workmen.

First the canvas was cut to allow air to circulate about the girls. Then Jasper, unable to move the trunk, chopped away some of the

smaller branches to allow the girls to crawl through. The trunk sagged a bit.

"Hurry, girls, hurry," moaned Harriet to her three companions, urging them forward while she herself, on hands and knees and with arched back, braced herself under a cot.

"Coming, girls?" cried Crazy Jane.

"Help! The whole thing ith falling down," wailed Tommy.

Jane did help. She pulled first Tommy, then Cora and Patricia out from under the canvas. Then was heard the snap of a brace of a cot.

"Harriet!" shrieked Jane, but no answer came.

Seizing one of the side poles of the tent, Crazy Jane pushed it under the cot that now held down the unconscious Harriet. Telling Jasper to raise the cot as well as he could with the pole as a lever, she herself brought Harriet out into the night.

"Oh, my darlin'!" moaned Jane.

"Is—is she dead?" gasped a number of the girls who were gathered around.

"No, I'm not dead," replied Harriet faintly, opening her eyes, for the rain in her face had revived her.

"Come, Jasper," ordered Mrs. Livingston. "Carry Miss Burrell to the nearest tent and we'll get her to bed."

"I can walk, Mrs. Livingston," protested Harriet; but when she tried to do so she caught her breath and put her hand to her back, a gesture not unnoticed by the Chief Guardian. So Jane put her arm about her friend and helped her to the offered tent.

Once inside, Crazy Jane saw the form of Patricia Scott snugly settled in the cot needed for Harriet.

"Get out of there, young lady," ordered Jane.

Patricia merely stared, making no move.

Saying nothing further, scarcely looking at the girl, Jane walked over, took hold of the cot, and tumbled Patricia on to the floor, then proceeded to smooth it up and put Harriet, amused but too weak to protest, in it.

Patricia, furious, rose and started toward Crazy Jane, but seeing Mrs. Livingston in the tent opening stopped abruptly.

"You may go to my quarters and lie down, Miss Scott," said Mrs. Livingston evenly, then turned to Harriet to see how she felt.

Miss Partridge, now Mrs. Livingston's Chief Assistant, had made hot tea for the girls, and presently all was again quiet in the camp, the storm having blown itself out.

The next morning Harriet was better. Mrs. Livingston questioned Patricia and Cora and Tommy about the events of the previous night.

Tommy had been too excited to know what really had occurred and all she could say was:

"Harriet ith a wonder, Mitheth Livingthton, and if it hadn't been for her we'd all be dead."

All the Chief Guardian got from either Patricia or Cora was that they were sorely frightened but that Jasper finally got them out.

"You forget Miss McCarthy's part, young ladies. But that will do now; you may go."

It was from Harriet, by dint of questioning, and by piecing together the facts that she herself had witnessed that Mrs. Livingston arrived at the knowledge of what had occurred.

"There are some honors coming to both you and to Miss McCarthy," was the Chief Guardian's last remark before bidding the girl good day.

That afternoon Harriet saw Mr. Collier in the camp. Cora took him over to talk with the Chief Guardian, but though Harriet wished greatly for an introduction to the young man she received none.

"After all, I suppose I could have done nothing. But I do wish Cora would not slip off to that dance, though I suppose she will," she reflected.

When talking to Mrs. Livingston Harriet had asked and received permission to sleep outdoors that night, thus striving for honors in sleeping

out five consecutive nights. Tommy and Patricia had each been crowded into a tent with other girls, while to Harriet and Cora had been assigned a small A tent—the only tent not in use in the camp. So it was that Harriet was directing Jasper how to build her couch of pine boughs just outside this tent when Patricia aproached her, speaking to her for the first time since the rescue from the fallen tent.

"If you're to sleep out, Miss Burrell, would you mind if I use the cot in the tent to be with my friend, Miss Kidder?" she asked in an insolent manner.

"Not at all. You are welcome to my cot."

"Thanks," drawled Patricia, and turned away.

At dinner Patricia reported that Cora was not well and did not wish to eat. When the meal was over Mrs. Livingston went to the tent.

"No, Mrs. Livingston, I'd rather not eat. I am not really ill, only nervous and excited after our experience of last night. I'll be better in the morning."

"Very well, Cora. But you'd better not get up for breakfast. I'll send you a tray."

Around the campfire that night the Chief Guardian announced the award of five beads to Miss Harriet Burrell for her heroic conduct in the face of great peril during the storm.

"How much doeth thhe get for the thoup?" queried Tommy, with an air of innocence.

Mrs. Livingston smiled and continued:

"Our new Camp Girl, Miss Jane McCarthy, is also awarded five beads for distinguished services in rescuing four girls from the tent."

"Hurrah!" chortled Jane. "I'd rather have 'em than my string of pearls, and I'm daffy over them! Come over to Meadow-Brook and I'll show 'em to you, Mrs. Livingston."

"Miss McCarthy, try to choose your words. Slang should be avoided," but the Chief Guardian's eyes twinkled.

"Slang? Why, I cut out slang two years ago," replied the girl earnestly.

Just before Harriet fell asleep that night she heard Cora slip from the tent and creep away in the darkness. She sighed, but made no sign. It was some time later that she was roused by a curious sniffing not far away. She was startled and sat up suddenly.

"Pshaw, it's just a dog," she muttered. "But how did a dog come here so far away from any house?" she mused.

Then, her eyes becoming accustomed to the darkness, she gasped, then screamed at the top of her voice.

"What now?" sneered Patricia from inside the tent.

"A bear! A bear!" Harriet yelled and jumped from her couch.

The camp was instantly in an uproar. Some of the girls quaked with fear. Some of them followed Harriet Burrell and Jane McCarthy as they ran excitedly after the fleeing bear.

Jasper, who had stopped to get an axe, brought up the rear of the pursuing group.

Harriet and Jane, who were in advance, stopped suddenly when the bear turned. There was no time for thought. Jane struck out with a heavy stick she had picked up and hit the animal on the nose. At the same time Harriet tossed at it a flaming brand she had snatched from the half-extinguished fire.

Frightened, the bear again turned and once more fled on.

"Hold him, I say! Hold him!" roared Jasper.

"Just see us do it," giggled Jane.

At that moment the bear plunged down the bank into the creek. The girls, taken by surprise and not realizing how near they were to the stream, slid after it, each falling with a loud splash into the water.

"Girls, are you hurt?" called Miss Partridge.

"No, ma'am," shivered Jane. "But the pesky bear got away. Hear him go? He's off into the woods."

The two girls returned somewhat sheepishly to the camp and got into dry pajamas.

"Girls, what did you expect to do if you caught the bear?" asked Mrs. Livingston dryly.

"I don't know," admitted Harriet.

"Ask Jasper. He called to us to hold it," giggled Crazy Jane.

After a while quiet once more settled over Camp Wau-Wau. When Harriet entered the tent the next morning to dress for breakfast she noted that Cora had not returned.

"How is Miss Kidder this morning, Miss Burrell?" asked Miss Partridge.

Harriet flushed slightly and stammered:

"I—I don't know, Miss Partridge."

"Is she coming to breakfast?"

Here Mrs. Livingston broke in:

"I gave her permission to lie late this morning after her illness yesterday evening. Will you carry her a tray after breakfast?"

"I will take it to the tent, Mrs. Livingston," faltered Harriet.

"If Miss Kidder is not feeling well, kindly come and tell me. I will see her myself."

"Very well," was the low reply.

A sudden revulsion of feeling swept over the girl and a look of terror flamed into her eyes. She was deceiving these kind women! She was untrue to the high standards of the camp!

When Harriet reached the tent with Cora's tray she found the girl tucked in her cot.

"Why did you wake me up?" demanded Cora petulantly, opening her eyes.

"I beg your pardon. Here is a tray Mrs. Livingston asked me to bring to you."

"Put it on the chair and please leave me to myself," was the ungracious reply.

Harriet went out and ran into the arms of Jane McCarthy.

"Now, Harriet Burrell, confess. You wouldn't look so woebegone unless you thought you'd been doing wrong. I know you, darlin'. I know, too, that you haven't been as wicked as you think you've been. Confess."

"Oh, but I can't tell without involving others, Jane!"

"That's all right. You're not talebearing. You're only telling your woes to another girl."

Finally Jane had the whole story out of the troubled girl.

"Humph, we'll see about this."

"Oh, Jane, you won't go to the Guardians?"

"We'll see. Well, I'll not go directly from you, you conscientious old Harriet."

Jane burst in on the surprised Cora.

"Where were you last night?"

"What is that to you? Is there no privacy in this camp?"

"No. I know where you were. You were at a dance at The Pines and you sneaked out and went with that Collier chap—all alone with him, too."

"I didn't. His sister was with us. She came back with us and—"

"Thanks, darlin'," chuckled Jane. "Confession is good for a guilty soul."

"Oh!" gasped Cora, then burst into tears.

"Don't do that, darlin'," said Jane gently, then sat down and began to talk softly to the sobbing girl.

She told her that Harriet had known for some time that she and Patricia had been the moving spirits in the hazing, that they were responsible for the spoiled soup, and told her that Harriet, at the expense of her own sense of honor, had protected her in the present instance. Cora for the first time saw herself as she was, weak-willed and the tool of the clever and unscrupulous Patricia. In the end she was persuaded to go to Mrs. Livingston and to make a clean breast of her part in the trouble.

That day Mrs. Livingston had several interviews in her private quarters. She told Harriet that she was sorry she had been led to deceive the Guardians, but as the fault grew out of her desire to protect another, she was forgiven.

What she said to Patricia Scott was never known. But the girl was soon after seen to leave the camp in the wake of Jasper, who was carrying her belongings.

Cora's case came up before the camp council that evening. She made a complete confession in so far as her own part in the trouble was concerned. The girls, knowing she had been used by the strong-willed Patricia, voted unanimously to allow her to remain a member of the camp in the Pocono Woods.

"Harriet, can you forgive me?" asked Cora after the council had broken up.

"You were not yourself, dear. There's no forgiveness necessary. Shall we be friends?"

A new era in Camp Wau-Wau dated from that moment. The following days were the happiest that the Chief Guardian and the Camp Girls remembered to have passed in camp, the Meadow-Brook Girls enjoying every moment of time left to them there. What next happened to these girls will be related in a volume, entitled: "The Meadow-Brook Girls Across Country; or, The Exciting Tramp of the Young Pathfinders."

THE END